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Governance, Identity, and
Counterinsurgency Strategy

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PREFACE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The premise of most Western thinking on counterinsurgency is that success depends on establishing a perception of legitimacy among local populations. The path to legitimacy is often seen as the improvement of governance in the form of effective and efficient administration of government and public services. However, good governance is not the only basis for claims to legitimacy, especially in environments where ethnic or religious identities are politically salient. This paper raises new questions about the roles of governance and ethnic identities in counterinsurgencies and builds a conceptual and methodological foundation for future research on those questions.

Its main conceptual arguments are as follows:

- Prevailing policy and strategy for counterinsurgency in the United States reflect assumptions about the bases of political legitimacy that are rooted in Western political philosophy and Cold War history.

- In particular, conception of counterinsurgency as a competition of governance between insurgents and counterinsurgents is based on a materialistic view of social welfare, justice, and legitimate authority that is not universally held.

- A substantial body of scholarship establishes that conflicts where ethnic and religious identities are politically salient have different dynamics than other conflicts.

- In principle, counterinsurgency strategies emphasizing improved governance are likely to be less effective where identities are contested than where they are not. Anecdotal evidence supports this hypothesis, but it has not been subjected to serious empirical study.

- Design of counterinsurgency strategy should pay particular attention to the severity of ethnic or religious cleavages prior to the outbreak of conflict with the goal of determining whether group loyalties are likely to be malleable or relatively fixed during the conflict.

- Two other hypotheses worthy of examination regarding strategies that win the loyalty of a population and establish legitimacy, are that 1) distributional effects may be more important than absolute effects, and 2) political effects may be more important than economic effects.

Its main methodological arguments are as follows:

- Developers and analysts of counterinsurgency strategy should strive to distinguish between the effects of governance measures and security measures, despite the considerable difficulties of doing so.

- Legitimacy, though undoubtedly important to the theory of insurgency and counterinsurgency, is not an analytically tractable variable because generally it can only be inferred from the dynamics of other variables.

- Empirical assessments of counterinsurgency run a high risk of endogeneity problems due to the similar observable characteristics of the security measures implemented by counterinsurgents and the sustainable security environment those measures are intended to help create. This implies that detailed analytic techniques (such as process tracing) focused on local levels of activity are best suited to analysis of counterinsurgency.

- The war in Iraq presents good opportunities for comparative case study analysis.

Chapter 1: Governance, Identity, and Legitimacy: Cracks in the Intellectual Foundations of Traditional Counterinsurgency Strategy

Introduction and Overview

The counterinsurgency field manual published by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps in December 2006 states "The primary objective of any counterinsurgent is to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government."[1] This judgment is in keeping with a conventional wisdom about counterinsurgency strategy that has accumulated over several decades of war and scholarship.

And yet, in November 2006, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Michael Hayden told the Iraq Study Group that

> The current situation, with regard to governance in Iraq, was probably irreversible in the short term, because of the world views of many of the [Iraqi] government leaders, which were shaped by a sectarian filter and a government that was organized for its ethnic and religious balance rather than competence or capacity. . . The Iraqi identity is muted. The Sunni or Shia identity is foremost.[2]

Hayden's comment highlights a tension between the apparent lessons of history and those of recent events. The premise of most Western thinking on counterinsurgency is that success depends on establishing a perception of legitimacy for the ruling regime among some critical portion of the local population. Among the mechanisms available to counterinsurgents for establishing that legitimacy, one of the most prominent in both practice and doctrine has been the improvement of governance in the form of effective and efficient administration of government and public services. Good governance, by this logic, is the key to "winning hearts and minds."

However, good governance is not the only plausible basis for claims to legitimacy among contending political factions, especially in environments where ethnic or religious identities are politically salient. Experience in Iraq suggests that in environments where the ethnic or religious identity of the ruling regime is contested, claims to legitimacy may rest primarily on the ethnic identity of those who govern, rather than on how they govern.

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1 Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army; Headquarters, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Department of the Navy, December 2006) (hereafter referred to as "FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5"), p. 1-21.
2 Quoted in Bob Woodward, "CIA Said Instability Seemed 'Irreversible,'" *Washington Post*, July 12, 2007, p. 1.

Scholars and policymakers are just beginning to acknowledge and address these challenges to traditional views on counterinsurgency strategy. This process will require a careful synthesis of ideas and empirical insights from a wide range of academic disciplines and historical experiences that bear on the complex interactions among concepts of legitimacy, governance, ethnic identity, and political violence.

This paper represents an effort to build conceptual and methodological foundations for future research in this broad process. It proceeds in four main steps, each with its own chapter.

- This first chapter describes the intellectual foundations of existing policy and doctrine on counterinsurgency; provides an overview of scholarship on the relationships among ethnic and religious political identities, legitimacy, and conflict; and argues that future analysis and development of counterinsurgency strategy would benefit from greater attention to the dynamics of ethnic and religious identities.

- Chapter 2 develops a proposal for some hypotheses and an associated analytic framework to address the need identified in the first chapter and discusses some methodological challenges related to analyzing counterinsurgency and ethnic identity.

- Chapter 3 applies the framework developed in the second chapter to case studies of three prominent counterinsurgencies of the 20th century: in Malaya, Algeria, and South Vietnam.

- Chapter 4 presents a comparative analysis of the case studies in Chapter 3 with two purposes in mind: first, to provide preliminary tests of the hypotheses developed in Chapter 2; second, to generate insights about the framework, itself, and to suggest improvements and refinements for future analysis.

Clearly, this paper was motivated in part by the challenges facing the United States and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the significance of the subject extends beyond current events and beyond the interests of Western policy makers. Irregular warfare, civil conflict, and attempts to mitigate them are likely to be common features of the international policymaking landscape for the foreseeable future, and the issues under examination here have significant implications for the design of any counterinsurgency strategy.

Moreover, the relationships among identity, legitimacy, and traditional political and military organizations are fertile territory for theoretical innovation in a time of declining dominance for the nation-state in geopolitics. If hypotheses generated by a synthesis of historical and theoretical literature on these diverse topics can be tested effectively with case studies of current operations, such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan, then that research could be suggestive of more broadly applicable lessons for counterinsurgency and international security.

This paper is also motivated in part by a notion that academic and policy communities may have accepted too uncritically conventional wisdom about the centrality of "winning hearts

and minds" to success in counterinsurgencies. This phrase can and often does stand for very different types of strategies, some of which may be ineffective or inappropriate in some circumstances. Is it possible, then, that the hearts-and-minds heuristic is more pernicious than insightful as a guide to strategy?

It is important to reiterate that this paper's primary goal is to provide conceptual and methodological foundations for further research, not to generate firm conclusions or recommendations about counterinsurgency strategy. More extensive empirical inquiry will be necessary to justify any such conclusions.

Irregular Warfare – Past as Prologue?

Political violence in the second half of the 20th century was dominated by irregular warfare.[3] While the world's great powers developed firepower of unprecedented volume and technical sophistication, the era's military history was being acted out principally by insurgents and counterinsurgents in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This phenomenon may be attributed to two major historical factors. First, the collapse of European colonial rule unleashed a torrent of violent struggles for power and political identity in newly independent, but politically and economically immature regions. Second, the global reach of political and ideological competition between Western democracies and the Soviet Union sparked or exacerbated civil conflicts for over forty years, from Greece in the late 1940s to Nicaragua in the 1980s.

Today, the immediate traumas of decolonization and the Cold War are largely past, but the prospect of widespread and persistent irregular warfare remains. According to one common view of the future security environment,[4] threats to international security will arise in large part from countries or groups that are either unable or unwilling to accommodate a globalized

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[3] This general type of warfare goes by many names: revolutionary, insurgency and counterinsurgency, irregular, guerrilla, fourth-generation, and low-intensity conflict, to name the most prominent ones. Differences among these terms can be distinguished, but all of them refer to warfare conducted by relatively weak parties against more powerful adversaries by often sporadic and indirect means and usually toward the end of gaining political concessions or control. I will favor the term "counterinsurgency" here, since it is the term most applicable to the strategies and tactics of the more powerful, albeit reactive, side of this type of warfare, the side on which the United States has repeatedly found itself. I will generally use "irregular warfare" to refer to the broader category.

[4] See Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991); Robert D. Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000; Thomas P.M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (New York: Putnam, 2004); Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004; Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper No. 379, 2006; Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (New York: Knopf, 2007).

economic system, together with all of the cultural implications of such a system. Such groups are likely to be both economically marginalized and militarily weak, leaving guerrilla-type tactics as one of their few means of advancing their interests.

While the significance of this trend remains speculative, American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have accelerated a growing perception of the need to prevent, counter, and conduct irregular warfare. One reflection of this perception is that formal strategic planning in the U.S. government has elevated the priority given to preparing for these challenges.[5]

The sense of urgency apparent in current policy debates on counterinsurgency can be attributed in part to the fact that this type of warfare has often been performed poorly by modern governments and militaries. While notable exceptions exist, counterinsurgents have tended to overemphasize military operations in counterinsurgencies and underemphasize political solutions.

Perhaps two reasons for the mixed performance stand out. First, fighting this kind of warfare is inherently difficult. Targets are elusive and few; and the loyalties of civilian populations are constantly shifting and difficult to gauge in any case. The resulting slowness and messiness of such operations prompted the celebrated British officer T. E. Lawrence to compare fighting guerrilla wars to "eating soup with a knife."[6] Second, modern militaries, especially those of large, rich nations like the United States have not typically been organized, trained, and equipped to fight counterinsurgencies. Two of the most prominent examples of the chasm between extant military doctrine and the demands of counterinsurgencies are the American experience in Vietnam and the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. In both cases, conspicuously superior military forces were defeated at least in part because of their inability to adjust organizationally to strategic environments very different from those for which they were designed. In recent years, the U.S. government and military have come under harsh and widespread criticism for again misunderstanding the nature of the war they are fighting, this time in Iraq.

At the same time, the history of modern counterinsurgency is not one of universal failure. In many instances, such as those in the Philippines, Malaya, and Peru, to name only a few, counterinsurgents succeeded in defeating challenges to their control through various combinations of political, military, and other means. What accounts for the differences between the successes and the failures? Answers to this question, of course, are far from straightforward.

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[5] *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Executive Office of the President, 2006), pp. 43-44; *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Department of Defense, 2006), pp. 19, 37-3; *National Defense Strategy* (Department of Defense, 2005), pp. 2-4, 13-15,

[6] T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York: G.H. Doran, 1926).

Nevertheless, a great deal has been written about the question, and some common themes are evident in that literature, as well as in the policies and doctrine that reflect it.

Winning Hearts and Minds: Popular Support and Governance

Revolution and counterrevolution are as old as civilization. But "insurgency," and "counterinsurgency," defined as such, are largely inventions of the 20th century. For most of political history, the main tools of defeating rebellion – that is, what today we would call "counterinsurgency strategy" – were coercion, repression, annihilation, intimidation, and fear.[7] So, while the 20th century produced the phrase "winning hearts and minds," the 19th century British imperial experience offered up the ditty, "Whatever happens, we have got / The Maxim gun, and they have not."[8] Notwithstanding all of the carnage piled up by irregular warfare in the 20th century, default to this "Roman model" of wholesale slaughter generally ceased to be a viable choice in the counterinsurgency strategies of Western governments. Although paternalism remained firmly entrenched in Western policies toward the rest of the world, Wilsonian concepts of self-determination and legitimacy largely displaced one the main philosophical pillars of counter-revolutionary policy in colonial and earlier times: that might makes right.

These changing attitudes, however, made insurgency and counterinsurgency neither simpler nor rarer, and their prevalence in the 20th century has generated a vast literature on the subject by historians, political scientists, sociologists, military analysts, and others. Lists of principles for the conduct of successful counterinsurgency are abundant in this literature.[9] Variations abound, but if all these principles were reduced to a single central theme it would be that success and failure depend to a large extent on the resolution of the political conflicts underlying the military hostilities. According to this line of reasoning, the application of military force is not nearly as efficacious as in more conventional warfare. Rather, the contest between insurgents and counterinsurgents is seen as a competition for the prevailing sympathies of the

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[7] For a concise summary, see Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents Since 1750* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 26-43.

[8] The Maxim gun was one of the first machine guns invented and was used to devastating effect in late 19th century colonial wars. See Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice 3rd Edition* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996 (originally published in 1906)), pp. 440-441.

[9] For example, David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 74-90; Robert G. K. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency; The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 50-58; Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), pp. 233-246; Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse, 2nd edition* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), pp. 164-190; Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, John Nagl, "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, March-April 2006, pp. 49-53; and FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, pp. 1-21 to 1-29.

non-combatant populations where the conflicts are taking place. In one of the classic works of this literature, Mao Tse-tung famously observed that the relationship between insurgents and the broader population in which they operate is akin to fish and water, such that "guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation."[10]

From this understanding of insurgency came a broad consensus that one of the chief objectives of any organization conducting counterinsurgency operations must be to gain the loyalty and trust of the local civilian population. The popular shorthand for this complex socio-economic-political-military objective became "winning hearts and minds," a term that has survived in common usage to the present day. To be sure, other considerations, including more traditional military ones such as intelligence, logistics, and attrition of enemy forces, are crucial elements of counterinsurgency strategies as well. But in this type of warfare, it is supposed that the hearts and minds of the people, not territorial control or leadership, constitute the strategic "center of gravity" for which the adversaries compete.[11] In his renowned study, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, French army officer and theorist David Galula listed as his "first law" of counterinsurgency that "the support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as for the insurgent."[12]

With popular support as the foundation of counterinsurgency strategy, the question must turn then to how counterinsurgents can prevail in their competition for the people's allegiance. In this regard, winning hearts and minds is very often equated with the provision of good governance, in the form of improved material standards of living and government efficiency. The British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson, who served in Malaya and as an advisor to the American and South Vietnamese governments, concluded that "'Winning' the population can tritely be summed up as good government in all its aspects. . . such as improved health measures and clinics . . . new schools . . . and improved livelihood and standard of living." Later in the same work, he continues, "the real purpose of aid in all contexts, including counter-

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[10] Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, translated by Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Praeger, 1961), Chapter 6, p. 4 and Chapter 1, p. 2.

[11] The first use of the phrase "hearts and minds" in the context of revolutionary warfare is often attributed to the British administrator during much of the Malayan Emergency, Sir Gerald Templer, who argued that "the answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the people." See Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War; Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 3, and Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 1-2.

[12] Galula, p. 74.

insurgency [is] to help the local government get its organization right and its departments working efficiently."[13]

One representative scholarly rendering of this view comes from the widely-cited author and National War College professor Bard O'Neill:

> . . . popular support [for insurgency] from the elites and especially the masses stems primarily from concrete grievances concerning such things as land reform, injustice, unfair taxation, and corruption. It is over these issues that the battle to win hearts and minds is most directly enjoined. History suggests that a government can most effectively undercut insurgencies that rely on mass support by splitting the rank and file away from the leadership through calculated reforms that address the material grievances and needs of the people.[14]

Insurgency and counterinsurgency historian Thomas Mockaitis argues along similar lines: "Trust and cooperation depend . . . on recognizing and as far as possible addressing the real needs and the legitimate grievances on which the insurgency feeds. . . People generally support an insurgency out of a shared sense of wrong or frustration at not having their basic needs met."[15] Or, as writer and retired Marine T. X. Hammes has succinctly put it, "the fundamental weapon in counterinsurgency is good governance."[16]

This perspective is not limited to scholars or political commentators. It is also clearly evident in the way U.S. government organizations approach the problem of insurgency and counterinsurgency. One prominent example of this view can be found in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency," which argues that

> Support of the people is vital to the survival of the insurgents who depend on them for food, shelter, recruits, and intelligence. The government's challenge is to regain the allegiance of a population already alienated by government failures to address basic grievances. Poor peasants and farmers are, however, seldom motivated by abstractions or vague promises. Their willingness to provide support hinges on concrete incentives – material benefits or demonstrable threats.[17]

Also, as noted earlier, the U.S. military's new counterinsurgency doctrine features this conception of the centrality of popular support and governance, stating that "The primary objective of any counterinsurgent is to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government."[18] And the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, written by the Marine Corps and the Special Operations Command, asserts that forces conducting irregular

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[13] Thompson, pp. 112-113, 161.
[14] O'Neill, pp. 171-172.
[15] Thomas Mockaitis, "Winning Hearts and Minds in the 'War on Terrorism,'" *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 14, no. 2, March 2003, pp. 21-22.
[16] Thomas X. Hammes, "Countering Evolved Insurgent Networks," *Military Review*, July-August 2006, pp. 20-21.
[17] Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (undated), p. 8.
[18] FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, p. 1-21.

warfare should emphasize "winning the support of the relevant populations, promoting friendly political authority, and eroding adversary control, influence, and support."[19]

Moreover, beyond these academic and doctrinal assertions is a history replete with projects launched by counterinsurgents focused on land reform, economic development, public health, education, construction of infrastructure and other such initiatives.

In sum, the strength and ubiquity of such views on the importance of providing good governance and of winning hearts and minds amounts to what might reasonably be labeled conventional wisdom on counterinsurgency strategy. What accounts for this phenomenon? How did this conventional wisdom develop and why has it retained its appeal over several decades of irregular warfare?

The Roots of Conventional Wisdom: Legitimacy, People's Wars and Modernization Theory

The association of legitimacy and good governance is rooted in the dominant traditions of Western political philosophy. In the works of such foundational thinkers as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, legitimacy is seen as derived from a social contract between a government and free individuals. Individuals relinquish some of their own sovereignty to the government in exchange for a specific set of privileges and protections. In this formulation, legitimacy and good governance are tightly woven, if not synonymous. Max Weber characterized this conception of legitimacy as a "legal" or "rational" paradigm, one of three pure types of authority, or "legitimate domination." Legal authority, according to Weber, rests "on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands."[20] Weber contrasts this form of authority with "traditional" and "charismatic" forms in which legitimacy comes more from, respectively, traditional social hierarchies or individual personal character than from codified rules and laws. The discussion will return to "traditional authority" later in the chapter, but it is the legal-rational conception of legitimacy that has dominated Western political thought in the modern world.

Moreover, a rational, governance-based view of legitimacy formed the basis for political development not only in advanced, Western, or industrialized societies. Crucially important to this discussion of insurgency and counterinsurgency, it also formed the foundation of the most

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[19] *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (Version 1.0)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, June 2007), p. 18.

[20] Max Weber, "The Types of Legitimate Domination," in Michael Hechter, ed. *Theories of Social Order* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), p. 184.

prominent revolutionary philosophy of the 20th century – Marxism. In their emphasis on developmental aspects of capitalism and on economic classes as the basic units of political life, both Leninist and Maoist incarnations of Marxism were deeply modern and, at least in principle, hostile to traditionally-based, nationalist or ethnic political structures.[21] Accordingly, communist insurgents throughout the developing world advanced a fundamentally materialist view of social justice. In their view, legitimate government was not simply one that guaranteed freedoms and basic public goods, but one that enforced a particular distribution of resources and capital seen to be inextricably linked to freedom. In this sense, Marxist revolutionaries that dominated the landscape of post-World War II insurgency saw legitimacy as even more closely linked to specific forms of "good governance" than did their liberal opponents.

Probably the most important variety of this revolutionary ideology in action was the Maoist "people's war." Over nearly two decades of civil war in China, Mao Tse-tung transformed V. I. Lenin's urban, elite-driven interpretation of Marxism into a rural, peasant-based revolutionary doctrine. Revolutionaries throughout the developing world have since seized on Mao's principles to help organize popular revolts among rural masses against elite, allegedly repressive governments. Rebels from the Viet Minh in the 1940s to the Shining Path in the 1980s to the Communist Party of Nepal in the 2000s have claimed Mao's mantle. Though people's wars have varied considerably across different times and cultures, Maoist ideology retained most of its central Marxist elements related to class conflict, social justice, and economic determinism, especially at the height of the Cold War.[22]

At the same time, opponents of Marxist ideology and revolution, especially in the United States, were constructing their own interpretive framework for explaining political and economic development in the post-war era. The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of "modernization theory" in Western academic and policy communities (also known as "political development theory"), a theory of development that emphasized a teleological convergence of societies through several stages of modernization from primitive "traditional" forms toward Western-style industrialization, secularization, and political pluralism.[23] Legitimacy in this framework was

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[21] For an overview, see John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), especially pp. 826-828, 838-845. Shy and Collier comment that "there is evidence suggesting a marked 'Westernization' of anti-imperialist revolutionary thinking in modern times, with a return to the ancient sources a very late phenomenon, perhaps more a form of cultural nationalism than a guide to revolutionary action." (p. 823)

[22] See Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[23] Representative works include David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Cyril E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); and Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton, 1962).

earned by whoever could most reliably guide the society along these hypothesized paths of modernization, with their characteristic signals of good governance – economic growth, political representation and efficient administration.

The principles of modernization theory were quite influential among policy makers in Washington who were eager for guidance in navigating the complex Cold War competition underway in the decolonizing "third" world. Modernization theory played a significant role in guiding American policy toward the developing world generally,[24] and toward counterinsurgency specifically.[25] Walt Rostow, an economist who had written one of the most prominent books on modernization and development, became President John F. Kennedy's deputy national security advisor. In a 1961 speech to Army Special Forces graduates, he characterized the Kennedy administration's perspective this way:

> The U.S. has a special responsibility of leadership . . . in aiding the long-run development of those nations which are serious about modernizing their economy and social life. And, as President Kennedy has made clear, he regards no program of his Administration as more important than his program for long-term economic development . . . Independence cannot be maintained by defensive measures alone. Modern societies must be built, and we are prepared to help build them.[26]

By 1962, these concepts had been formalized in the U.S. Overseas Internal Defense Policy statement of August 1962 and in the Inter-departmental Seminar on Counterinsurgency that was taught at the State Department. These new statements of policy and doctrine codified the notion that the remedy to political violence and instability in the developing world, in the words of historian Ian Beckett, "lay in socio-economic development and appropriate nation-building measures based on concepts of security, good government and progress."[27]

Before long, the application of this philosophy to counterinsurgency policy had acquired the name "hearts-and-minds theory." RAND Corporation analysts Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf summarized the principal tenets of hearts-and-minds theory as: emphasis on popular support based on inherent "ardor and preferences"; stress on internal grievances over external influence; emphasis on economic deprivation and inequality; and conception of insurgent conflict in terms of "electoral analogy," where outcomes are driven by and reflect the prevailing

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[24] See Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), and Lisa Anderson, *Pursuing Truth, Exercising Power: Social Science and Public Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 94-97.

[25] See D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), especially Chapter 5; Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1977), Chapter 3; Austin Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), pp. 21-23.

[26] Walt W. Rostow, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Underdeveloped Areas," Speech at the U.S. Army Special Warfare School, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, June 28, 1961.

[27] Beckett (2001), p. 186.

affiliations of majorities or substantial minorities. In their judgment, made in 1970, hearts-and-minds theory "influences and perhaps dominates much discussion and thinking about this range of problems."[28]

Viewed through the lens of Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Marxist revolutionary ideology and hearts-and-minds counterrevolutionary ideology may appear to stand in stark opposition to one another. And within the framework of Western political philosophy, they do. Outside of this framework, however, they might more usefully be characterized as opposite sides of the same Western coin. While their normative aspects point in different directions, their assumptions and descriptions of the developing world share much in common. As political scientist D. Michael Shafer argues

> Both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries assume that the Third World's shared experience with colonialism had everywhere produced a potentially revolutionary situation. Thus, Americans fret over the consequences of modernization – in particular, the possibility of Communists capturing uprooted peoples in the hiatus between tradition and a higher state, modernity. The revolutionary masters also focus on the inevitable, universal course of development, but in the deracination process they see the formation of classes, and so the fundamental dynamic of development. Each, however, assumes the malleability of the masses and, despite reference to an overarching process of change, focuses on tactical measures for 'helping history.' In other words, both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries identify their role as manager of modernization.[29]

Based in part on this assessment, Shafer characterizes American counterinsurgency doctrine as "Mao minus Marx."[30]

Among the important similarities between these approaches to insurgency and counterinsurgency are the bases they assume to be dominant in establishing political legitimacy. In Weber's terms, both approaches posit rationalist grounds for legitimate authority. In his study of the role of legitimacy in insurgencies, Timothy Lomperis points out that

> . . . modern legitimacy can turn to several different models, including communist ones. Communism, after all, is a product of, or at least a reaction to, the industrial revolution of the West and offers a competitive system of modern political legitimacy to that of the liberal democracies. Yet even communists hold to the two hallmarks of modern legitimacy. They, too, have a view of history rooted in a 'dialectic' of material progress . . .[31]

One important product of the similarities in these opposing strategies is that successful application of one may in fact defeat the other, since they are competing, in some sense, on equivalent terms. From this perspective, the gradual expansion in the numbers of liberal

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[28] Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham, 1970), p. 150. Also see Shafer, pp. 116-118.

[29] Shafer, p. 108.

[30] Ibid., p. 104.

[31] Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 66.

democracies around the world may have something to do with the declining incidence of Maoist people's wars. As Ian Beckett concludes, "where states genuinely embraced or moved toward democracy the Maoist model had little to offer, since much depended on convincing the population that the limited consultation process envisaged in the relationship between the party and the 'masses' was sufficient democracy."[32]

Thus was forged the intellectual foundations of counterinsurgency strategy in the United States, and much of this foundation is still visible in the current policy and doctrine cited earlier in this chapter. Even so, the influence and longevity of these concepts and policies have not been without their critics.

Modernization Theory Under Assault: Hearts and Minds Dethroned or Refined?

For all of its influence in academic and policy circles, modernization theory came under widespread attack by the late 1960s, both for its conceptual shallowness and for its inability to account for the frequency of insurgency and revolution throughout the developing world. Most conspicuously, the persistence of the Viet Cong's resistance to American and South Vietnamese counterinsurgency efforts raised pointed questions about the viability of the assumptions of prevailing strategy and doctrine.

Another wave of literature emerged aiming to correct some of the flaws of modernization theory, particularly its emphasis on elites as critical agents of modernization and its tendency to link economic development inextricably with political stability. This literature sought to address the causes of revolution and insurgency directly and tended to locate those causes in socio-economic dislocations associated with the transition of societies from traditional to modern forms. One of the earliest and most influential of these works was Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies*, where he argued that violence and instability "was in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics, coupled with the slow development of political institutions."[33] On the one hand, this argument was a departure from the more optimistic perspectives of earlier works that touted the inevitable correlation of modernization and peaceful progress. On the other hand, as Charles Tilly points out, Huntington largely operates from within the broader framework that associates development with Western forms of political and economic organization.[34]

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[32] Beckett (2001), p. 81.
[33] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 4.
[34] Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?" *Comparative Politics*, vol. 5, no. 3, April 1973, pp. 430-436.

Another focus of criticism of modernization theory was its general insensitivity to variations in local conditions and the resulting universalism of its policy prescriptions. If, in fact, modernization was supposed to follow similar paths throughout the developing world, then successful policy implementation need not depend on deep expertise or experience in particular regions or cultures. What followed from this were policies of U.S. support for development that were probably more ambitious and optimistic than was warranted, such as the Alliance for Progress in Latin America and the early American involvement in South Vietnam. Former Undersecretary of State George Ball, for one, took a skeptical view of this trend in what he referred to as "nation building," complaining that "the most presumptuous undertaking of all [assumed that] American professors could make bricks without the straw of experience and with indifferent and infinitely various kinds of clay."[35]

In time, skepticism of grand theories of development helped to foster a new emphasis in academic work on the sociological roots of revolution and insurgency, and particularly on the interaction of modern economic practices with traditional political structures in peasant villages. Sociologist Timothy Wickham-Crowley identifies three "microstructural schools" in this body of work.[36] One school argues that different economic structures encourage different dynamics of collective action, and that "revolutionary action is to be found when cultivators derive their income from 'wages' (rather than land)."[37] According to the second school, capitalism tends to break down "age-old systems of patron-client . . . systems of reciprocity." Peasant revolts, in turn, represent efforts to protect those systems.[38] The third school holds that peasants do not respond to a shared "moral economy" of the kind postulated by the second school, but rather to rational self-interest "in a way perfectly intelligible to the economics of utility-maximization."[39]

Other analysts seeking explanations for political violence in the developing world looked to the psychological dynamics of individuals and groups in areas of conflict. Prominent among these arguments is the theory that revolution is caused by feelings of relative deprivation. According to this theory, it is not poverty or repression, per se, that cause people to take up arms against their government, but rather the unfulfilled promises of rising expectations in societies in transition. In the words of political scientist Ted Robert Gurr, "Discontent [is] not a function of

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[35] Quoted in Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 30.

[36] Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Guerillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 92.

[37] See Jeffery Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York: The Free Press, 1975).

[38] See James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976) and Eric R. Wolf, Peasant Wars of the 20th Century (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

[39] See Samuel Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1979).

the discrepancy between what men want and what they have, but between what they want and what they believe they are capable of attaining."[40] This relationship between rising expectations and revolt is explicitly recognized in the U.S. military's new counterinsurgency manual.[41]

In addition to these works of sociology and political psychology, the national security policy community also offered some dissents to prevailing views of insurgency and counterinsurgency during the late 1960s and 1970s. Most directly relevant to this discussion is the work cited earlier of two scholars working for the RAND Corporation, Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr. In a 1970 book,[42] these analysts argued that the common focus in counterinsurgency strategy on hearts and minds was somewhat misdirected and overly ambitious. First, they argued that the popular support generally considered to be the focus of competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents could be readily understood in terms of cost-benefit trade-offs rather than inherent preferences. "Fear (damage-limiting) and reward (profit-maximizing) may be as powerful spurs to desired behavior as conscience and conviction." Second, they suggested that actions taken to constrain the behavior of insurgents are more likely to be effective than actions taken to persuade the population to support the government's side.[43] Leites and Wolf also questioned the linkage between economic aid and winning popular support, pointing out that greater resources might simply allow people to exercise their existing preferences more effectively rather than actually change their preferences.[44]

Overall, academic and policy-oriented reactions to modernization theory and hearts-and-minds counterinsurgency theory made substantial strides toward refining understandings and assumptions about development and the causes of political violence. However, two factors limited the impact of these critiques as an impetus for reconceptualizing how counterinsurgency strategy was actually developed and practiced by the United States and its allies. First, even these more sophisticated frameworks tended to focus on rural, peasant-based insurgencies and, in emphasizing the economic effects of modernization, retained a predominantly materialist viewpoint on the sources and dynamics of political legitimacy.[45]

Second, the end of the United States' military involvement in Vietnam in 1973 initiated an era of intellectual cleansing of the U.S. military's strategy and doctrine. The prevailing view

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[40]   Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 359. Also see James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 1, February 1962, pp. 5-19.

[41]   FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, p. 1-3.

[42]   Leites and Wolf.

[43]   Ibid., see especially pp. 13, 37.

[44]   Ibid., pp. 18-20.

[45]   For example, Leites and Wolf explicitly acknowledge their methodological similarities with modernization theory while advancing a theory somewhat at odds with its conventional interpretations. See pp. 49-50.

among American military officers and defense intellectuals after Vietnam was that counterinsurgency and nation-building activities had been a harmful distraction from the military's pre-eminent mission of deterring and preparing to fight the massed conventional forces of the Soviet Union or its proxies.[46] Combined with détente's more accommodating posture toward Soviet policies in the developing world, this attitude among the U.S.'s military leadership went a long way toward severing the link between academic work on insurgency and counterinsurgency and its heretofore receptive government audience.

Interest among national security policy makers in "low intensity conflict" (as irregular warfare came to be known) was somewhat refreshed in the 1980s by U.S. involvement in Central American counterinsurgencies and in the 1990s by a spate of small wars that prompted U.S. interventions from Somalia to Bosnia. Nevertheless, the study of counterinsurgency remained an intellectual backwater in defense and military education, policy, planning, and discourse.[47] Counterinsurgency doctrine in the 1980s, in the form of the Army Field Manual on Low Intensity Conflict, became little more than a modification of "AirLand Battle," the Defense Department's newly ascendant concept for large-scale, conventional, mechanized warfare.[48]

Only after the U.S. found itself in the midst of major counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan did the national security policy community turn seriously to the task of revisiting the intellectual roots and assumptions of its extant strategy and doctrine on counterinsurgency. And when it did so, what it had to turn to was something of a hodgepodge of modernization theory, anti-communism, and a set of historical experiences that had been only partially digested in any coherent intellectual or strategic sense. Scholars and policymakers have made progress in recent years in rebuilding the foundation of counterinsurgency strategy, and tailoring it to its new 21st century context, and it is to this broad effort that this paper aims to contribute.

Yet there remains one major piece missing from the overview presented here of the intellectual foundations of counterinsurgency strategy. This piece is central to the argument advanced in these pages: the role of ethnic and religious identity in irregular warfare. One of modernization theory's and hearts-and-minds theory's most conspicuous faults, according to

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[46] See Wray R. Johnson, *From Counterinsurgency to Stability and Support Operations: The Evolution of U.S. Military Doctrine for Foreign Internal Conflict, 1961-1996*, unpublished dissertation, The Florida State University, 1997.

[47] See ibid., Part IV, John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 205-208; Robert Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular Warfare* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006).

[48] U.S. Department of the Army, *FM 100-20 Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington, DC, January 1981). See Johnson, Parts IV and V.

some critics, was its discounting, sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, of the role of ethnicity in determining how people relate to their governments. As political scientist Milton Esman explains, policies grounded in the materialist, progressive assumptions of modernization tended to presume

> . . . that with industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, and secularization, local, parochial, ethnic, and other 'traditional' identities would become increasingly irrelevant and would be succeeded by more 'rational' loyalties and association such as state nationalism, economic class, and cultural and recreational interests.[49]

Esman's language echoes that used by Weber to delineate different bases for political legitimacy. In those terms, "rational" grounds for legitimacy would comprise more concrete interests and basic grievances than those related to ethnicity or tribe. But Weber also points out that "traditional" authority, in contrast to "rational" authority, rests "on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them."[50] So, what if "concrete interests" and "basic grievances" in some insurgencies do not arise principally from issues surrounding material benefits or conditions? What if legitimacy is sometimes conferred to governments not according to the quality of their governance, but according to their conformance to group loyalties and traditional hierarchies of power? The next section outlines some of the major contributions of scholarship of the last few decades on ethnic identity and conflict, and suggests the importance of these contributions to the design of counterinsurgency strategies.

Ethnic Identity and Conflict

The end of the Cold War prompted a surge of interest in ethnicity and nationalism as causes of political violence. Bitter civil wars on the periphery of the former Soviet bloc, such as those in Tajikistan, Chechnya, and Bosnia, conveyed a sense that ancient ethnic passions, long suppressed by totalitarian regimes, were once again in the ascendancy. Genocidal violence in Rwanda in 1994 did nothing to moderate this impression. But in fact, large-scale, ethnically- and religiously-driven political violence had been a constant feature of the post-World War II era, as any residents of southern Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Lebanon, to name only a few, could attest.

Scholars taking up this subject began to examine the ways in which political identities and loyalties can be influenced and even dominated by affiliations with ethnic and religious communities. Debates in this literature begin, naturally, with the definition of ethnicity, itself.

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[49] Milton J. Esman, *Introduction to Ethnic Conflict* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), p. 18.
[50] Weber, p. 184.

Max Weber's conception that ethnic identity is tied to but not limited to genetic kinship has proved to be quite durable over time. He defined ethnicity as "a subjective belief" in "common descent . . . whether or not an objective blood relationship exists."[51] In one of the most influential modern works on ethnicity and conflict, Donald Horowitz adopts a similar perspective, saying that "ethnicity is based on a myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits believed to be innate. Some notion of ascription, however diluted, and affinity deriving from it are inseparable from the concept of ethnicity."[52]

An even broader definition was offered by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who argued that "forms of identity based on social realities as different as religion, language, and national origin all have something in common, such that a new term is coined to refer to all of them – ethnicity. What they have in common is that they have all become effective foci for group mobilization for concrete political ends."[53] However, while the emphasis in this definition on the political mobilization of ethnic groups is helpful, as nationalism expert Walker Connor points out, lumping "national origin" together with other dimensions of ethnic identification begs some of the most important questions about politics and ethnic identity.[54]

This semantic confusion derives in part from the modern conflation of the terms "nation" and "state." According to Connor, states are delimited by political boundaries, and nations are delimited by ethnic boundaries, where "nation connotes a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related."[55] In practice, however, the two terms are often used interchangeably, together with "nation-state," a term originally reserved for the occasional correlation between an ethnically-based nation and a politically-based state.

As a result, the study of nationalism has developed concepts of different kinds of nationalism. For example, scholar Anthony Smith distinguishes between "civic-territorial" nationalism and "ethnic" nationalism. The former, which Smith calls "a peculiarly Western conception of the nation," is characterized by "historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology." With the latter, Smith argues, "the nation is seen as a fictive 'super-family', and it boasts pedigrees and genealogies to back up its claims . . . the place of law in the Western civic model is taken by vernacular culture,

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[51] Quoted in Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 53.
[52] Ibid., p. 52.
[53] Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 18.
[54] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 101.
[55] Ibid., pp. xi, 39-42.

usually languages and customs . . ."[56] Clearly, one of the principal differences between the two models is the basis on which membership and allegiance rests. In the civic model, they are matters of location and individual choice. In the ethnic model, they are matters of birth and group history.

Of course, though these distinctions are indispensable as analytic constructs, clean categorizations of real nations or states are seldom possible. As Smith himself acknowledges, "Every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms."[57] And Horowitz argues that in divided societies there is competition between kinship and territory ("consanguinity and contiguity," in his elegant formulation) as the dominant principle for socio-political organization.[58] The ambiguity and subjectivity of such classification schema provide the occasion for one of the other principal topics of debate in the literature on ethnicity and nationalism.

In simplest terms, this debate concerns the stability and robustness of political identities.[59] On one side of the debate are "primordialists" or "essentialists," who see identities as deeply rooted, powerful political motivations that are very slow to change.[60] On the other side are "instrumentalists" or "modernists," who see group identification primarily as a means of political mobilization designed to maximize material and political gains. Instrumentalists see ethnic identities as somewhat contingent and open to manipulation by elites and "political entrepreneurs."[61] Analysts offering explanations of ethnic group behavior based on rational choice models and international relations theories such as the security dilemma can reasonably be grouped in with this modernist school.[62] In between these two positions are the "constructivists," who agree with instrumentalists that group identities are socially constructed and therefore malleable, but look to a broader set of factors operating over longer periods of time

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[56] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991), pp. 9-12. Smith's treatment of this topic continues on pp. 79-84. Also see Esman, who includes "syncretic" nationalism (such as the weaving together of English, Scots, and Welsh in the United Kingdom) along with ethnic and civic forms (pp. 40-43).

[57] Ibid., p. 13.

[58] Horowitz, pp. 88-89.

[59] This summary draws especially on Esman, pp. 30-34, and Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics, 2nd edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), pp. 96-97.

[60] See Connor's description, pp. 103-106.

[61] See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism (New Perspectives on the Past)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[62] For example, Elizabeth Crighton and Martha Abele MacIver, "The Evolution of Protracted Ethnic Conflict: Group Dominance and Political Underdevelopment in Northern Ireland and Lebanon," *Comparative Politics*, 23:2, January 1991, pp. 127-142; David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security*, 21:2, Fall 1996, pp. 41-75; Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival*, vol. 35, no. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 27-47.

to explain changes in the dynamics of political identities.[63] The essence of the debate has been captured most colorfully, perhaps, by Ernest Gellner, who wondered, "Do nations have navels?"[64]

Beyond quips, Brenden O'Leary has provided a useful framework for summarizing these approaches to ethnic identity. He divides approaches along two dimensions – modernists, ethnocontinuists (similar to constructivists), and primordialists; and then whether the analysts believe that ideas, interests, or identities are most important in influencing behavior. He concludes the following:

Modernists tend to have greater optimism about the management and transcendence of national and ethnic conflict than do ethnocontinuists and primordialists. Those who emphasize the salience of ideas in explaining nationalism tend to emphasize the possibilities for conflict resolution created through alternative ideological mobilization or educational transcendence. Those who emphasize the salience of interests end to explain ethnic relations through a realist focus on the balance of power between groups. Those who emphasize identities focus on the recognition and the misrecognition of collective identities.[65]

Recent scholarship has tended to favor the modernist and constructivist positions in the debate. As another summary of the debate observed, "'Essentialism' has . . . been vigorously criticized, and constructivist gestures now accompany most discussions of 'identity.'"[66] However, as with many such debates, ample opportunity exists to incorporate aspects from each of these perspectives into coherent analysis of ethnic identity and conflict. Many scholars have taken just such an ecumenical approach. Ted Robert Gurr points out that "the fact that . . . resurgent nationalisms are usually led by modern political entrepreneurs . . . should not obscure the fact that their success depends on the persistence of deep-rooted sentiments of separate identity. . ."[67] Horowitz advises that "many of the puzzles presented by ethnicity become much less confusing once we abandon the attempt to discover the vital essence of ethnicity and instead

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[63] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1991).

[64] Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), chapter 15.

[65] Brendan O'Leary, "Nationalism and Ethnicity: Research Agendas on Theories of their Sources and their Regulation," in Daniel Chirot and Martin Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), pp. 37-48. O'Leary's category definitions differ somewhat from those outlined here, but his summary remains applicable (see p. 38).

[66] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1, February 2000, p. 6.

[67] Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1993), p. 91.

regard ethnic affiliations as being located along a continuum of ways in which people organize and categorize themselves. . . Group boundaries are made of neither stone nor putty."[68]

Overall, the literature on the subject makes clear that, while ethnic identities can be malleable and are not the only types of identities that are politically relevant,[69] they do often have important effects that cannot be adequately described or predicted by focusing on individual, rational behavior. This general conclusion is buttressed not only by the work in political science and sociology described above, but also by work in social psychology on the impact of group identification on individual behavior. As one analyst describes it, "Group identification is part of a larger phenomenon in which, contrary to the assumptions of economists and sociobiologists, humans find it easy to care about people and things in a way that goes far beyond narrow self-interest."[70]

Moreover, two factors suggest the potential for particularly high relevance of ethnic identity in the context of insurgency and counterinsurgency. First, while insurgencies tend to last a long time relative to conventional wars,[71] they are quite short compared to the generational time frames over which group identities and affiliations tend to evolve. Participants in such conflicts, therefore, can expect the dynamics of ethnic identities to be more of an environmental condition than a pliable object of policy manipulation. Second, group identities usually take on increased salience during civil conflict in multi-ethnic societies. In this way, ethnic conflict can become self-reinforcing as group boundaries are made more important and distinct simply by the onset of the initial violence.[72] These two factors are crucial to account for in applying insights from the literature on identity and ethnic conflict to any analysis of counterinsurgency strategy.

One of the ambiguities along Horowitz's "continuum of ways in which people organize and categorize themselves" is the difference between ethnic and religious identity. Many analysts consider religious affiliation as a powerful form of identity, but somewhat less so than ethnicity. For example, Chaim Kaufmann asserts that

> Ideological identity is relatively soft, as it is a matter of individual belief, or sometimes political
> behavior. Religious identities are harder, because while they also depend on belief, change
> generally requires formal acceptance by the new faith, which may be denied. Ethnic identities are

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[68] Horowitz, pp. 55, 66.
[69] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006). Also see Connor, p. 156.
[70] Clark McCauley, "The Psychology of Group Identification and the Power of Ethnic Nationalism" in Chirot and Seligman, eds., p. 359. Also see Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, "Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict" in the same volume (pp. 319-342).
[71] See Hammes (2006), p. 19.
[72] See Gurr (1993), pp. 69, 126; Harff and Gurr, p. 97.

hardest, since they depend on language, culture, and religion, which are hard to change, as well as parentage, which no one can change.[73]

Others stress the similarities in the emotional and political effects of religious and ethnic identification. As Anthony Smith argues, "Both religious and ethnic identities have striven to include more than one class within the communities created on their bases. . . Both stem from similar cultural criteria of classification. They frequently overlap and reinforce one another. And singly or together, they can mobilize and sustain strong communities."[74] In general terms, this paper will favor Smith's notion that religious and ethnic identities can operate in very similar ways and have similar effects.

One of the most important questions about how and to what extent ethnic identities contribute to political violence is the relative importance of those identities versus economic factors. Analytically, this often (though not necessarily) corresponds to a choice between focusing on behavioral processes in groups and focusing on structural incentives and preferences of individuals. This dichotomy brings the discussion around again to the previous section of this chapter on the historical influence and limitations of modernization theory. To reiterate the broad point, theories and policies of development and counterinsurgency in the United States and other European governments focused heavily on economic factors, structural incentives, and individual preferences. The judgment of the noted British counterinsurgency expert Sir Robert Thompson is representative of this general view: "However powerful national or religious forces may be, that of material well-being is as strong if not stronger."[75] The neglect of ethnic identity in the formulation of these theories and policies was sometimes unconscious, sometimes deliberate, but there is little doubt that it was neglected.

Many of the works cited above are littered with critiques of excessive emphasis among academicians and policymakers on rationalist, materialist approaches to explaining and addressing civil conflict in the developing world.[76] Two renderings of this point will stand here for the rest of them, quoted at length because of their direct relevance to the topic of this paper. Both passages were written in the 1980s, before the end of the Cold War had thrust ethnic conflicts into the spotlight of international relations.

The first is from Walker Connor:

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[73] Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil War," *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 4, Spring 1996, p. 141.

[74] Smith, pp. 6-8.

[75] Thompson, p. 65.

[76] In addition to the quotations here, see Connor, 29-57, 72-74, 145-161; Harff and Gurr, p. 96; Horowitz, pp. 13-14, 87, 96-135; Smith, pp. 5, 125.

To some, ethnonational identity seems little more than an epiphenomenon that becomes active as a result of economic deprivation and that will dissipate with greater egalitarianism. Others reduce it to the level of a pressure group that mobilizes in order to compete for scarce resources. A variation on the pressure group concept places greater emphasis on the role of elites; rather than a somewhat spontaneous mass response to competition, the stirring of national consciousness is seen as a ploy utilized by aspiring elites in order to enhance their own status. Finally, in the hands of many adherents of the "internal colonialism" model, entire ethnonational consciousness becomes equated with class consciousness. . . Explanations of behavior in terms of pressure groups, elite ambitions, and rational choice theory hint not at all at the passions that motivate Kurdish, Tamil, and Tigre guerrillas or Basque, Corsican, Irish, and Palestinian terrorists. Nor at the passions leading to the massacre of Bengalis by Assamese or Punjabis by Sikhs. In short, these explanations are a poor guide to ethnonationally inspired behavior. . .

. . . Analysts have been beguiled by the fact that observable economic discrepancies are near universal concomitants of ethnic strife . . . [but] defining ethnonational conflicts in terms of economic inequality is a bit like defining them in terms of oxygen.[77]

The second is from Donald Horowitz:

Processual theories of politics, developed in the United States at a time when ethnic claims were largely dormant, contain an inadvertent bias that impedes the understanding of ethnic politics. These theories hold that politics is a process for deciding 'who gets what'. . . following Hobbes, they conceive of power principally as a 'means to some future apparent good'. . . To understand ethnic conflict, it is necessary to reverse this emphasis. Power is, of course, often an instrument to secure other, tangible goods and benefits, ..but power may also *be* the benefit. . . Broad matters of group status regularly have equal or superior standing to the narrow allocative decisions often taken to be the uniform stuff of everyday politics.[78]

None of this criticism is meant to suggest that economic and material factors are insignificant, that ethnic grievances are more likely to cause civil conflict than economic grievances, or that ethnic and economic factors are always clearly separable.[79] To the contrary, a full appreciation of the roots and dynamics of irregular warfare undoubtedly benefits from complementary perspectives on legitimacy as it relates to both ethnic or religious identities and the quality of governance. The British insurgency expert Thomas Marks has argued persuasively that these different elements of insurgency have long co-existed to a greater extent than has been widely appreciated.[80] And another insurgency expert, Tony Joes, reminds us that "even during

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[77] Connor, pp. 73-74, 146, 147. Note that the collection referenced above was published in 1994, but the essays from which these quotes are taken were published in 1984 and 1987.

[78] Horowitz, pp. 186-187 (emphasis in original). A similar point is made by Indraneel Sircar, *Transnational Consociation in Northern Ireland and Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Role of Reference States in Post-Settlement Power Sharing*, unpublished dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006, p. 66.

[79] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars," *Perspectives in Politics,* vol. 1, no. 3, September 2003, pp. 475-494, presents an argument for the difficulty of distinguishing between "political and private identities and actions."

[80] Thomas A. Marks, "Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distortions," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 15, no. 1, Spring 2004, pp. 107-128.

the Cold War, conflicts ostensibly about Communism exhibited deep ethno-religious roots, as in Malaya, Vietnam, Tibet, Angola, Peru, and Afghanistan."[81]

A debate on the relative importance of political and economic factors, and private and public factors in causing civil wars has emerged in the past decade in a subfield often referred to as the "economics of conflict." Using econometric techniques and large-N data sets, some analysts have presented evidence that economic factors tend to be more potent sparks for civil wars than ethnic diversity.[82] Other analysts using similar methods, especially Nicholas Sambanis, have found direct linkages between the types of ethnic divisions in a society and their proclivity for political violence.[83]

This paper does not seek to resolve these questions since it is not principally concerned with the onset, frequency, or duration of civil wars, per se. But what the preceding discussion is meant to suggest, is that when ethnic conflicts do result in wars and insurgencies, their ethnic dimensions are likely to be extremely important in shaping the course of those wars and in determining the success or failure of efforts to stop them. And perhaps there is no better way to summarize this relationship between ethnic identity and political violence than by returning to the various grounds on which legitimacy is claimed. Horowitz directly addresses this issue and lays out four different potential bases for claims of "group legitimacy" in a given geographical space:[84] "prior occupation," or indigenousness; "special mission," usually one associated with religious claims; "traditional rule," where a group has ruled in a given area in the past; and "the right to succeed the colonial power," which relates to the status of particular groups at the point in time when colonial rule was ending. Note that none of these bases have much at all to do with Weber's notion of "rational" legitimacy or what would generally be associated with good governance. They all relate to the provenance and identity of the wielders of power.

To be fair, the importance of ethnic identities and dynamics has not escaped the attention of analysts of insurgency, especially in recent years. For example, Bard O'Neill distinguishes insurgent grievances arising from dissatisfaction with the prevailing "political communities" from those arising from grievances related to "political systems" or "policies."[85] Steven Metz

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[81] Joes, p. 3.

[82] See Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 28126, October 21, 2001, and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 2, February 2003.

[83] Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part I)," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 45, no. 3, June 2001, pp. 259-282; and Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "How Much War Will We See? Explaining the Prevalence of Civil War," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution,* vol. 46, no. 3, June 2002, pp. 307-334.

[84] Horowitz, pp. 201-216.

[85] O'Neill, pp. 15-19.

distinguishes "spiritual" from "commercial" insurgencies.[86]   And Timothy Lomperis distinguishes legitimacy derived from "belief" from legitimacy derived from "opportunity" or "interest."[87]   Each of these frameworks is directly related to the distinction made here between "identity" and "governance" as potential bases for legitimacy. More recently, the newest U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual counts "identity-focused" insurgencies as one of six main types of insurgencies.[88] And other analysts writing about irregular warfare in the midst of the war in Iraq have noted the powerful influence of ethnicity and religion on such wars.[89]

Nevertheless, the implications of these dynamics for the design and conduct of counterinsurgency strategy remain underexamined by systematic empirical inquiry. And, as the next section indicates, many still hold out great hope for the contributions of improved governance to prosecuting counterinsurgency in Iraq.

Therefore, with the body of scholarship outlined in this chapter as a conceptual frame of reference, it is reasonable if not imperative to wonder whether improving governance in the form of economic benefits and material standard of living is always an effective instrument for dampening civil conflict. In cases where ethnic identities are salient, it seems quite possible that the individually-based social contract of Western political philosophy would be displaced by a "contract" based on groups or communities, and that the quality of governance would then take a back seat to identity in the conference of legitimacy on political institutions.

Debates on Governance, Identity, and Counterinsurgency in Iraq

Nowhere are the relationships among governance, identity, and counterinsurgency more at issue than in the conflict underway in Iraq. Iraq provides a particularly complex environment in which to examine these relationships – the insurgencies there have been unusually, if not uniquely, decentralized, and comprise a variety of disparate interests.[90] One consequence of this

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[86]   Steven Metz, *The Future of Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993).
[87]   Lomperis, pp. 55-59.
[88]   FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, pp. 1-5, 1-8, 3-22.
[89]   See Ian Beckett, "The Future of Insurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 16:1, March 2005, pp. 27-31; Cassidy; Beatrice Heuser, "The Cultural Revolution in Counter-Insurgency," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1, February 2007, pp. 151-171; Frank Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?" *Parameters*, Summer 2007, especially pp. 81-82; Steven Metz and Raymond Millen*, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21ˢᵗ Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004), pp. 2-3; and Richard H. Shultz, Jr., and Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
[90]   For overviews, see Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), Chapters 1-3, and *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency*, International Crisis Group, February 15, 2006.

complexity is significant disagreement among policy makers and analysts in the United States about the best course for counterinsurgency strategy.

At least four distinct approaches in this regard have been prominent since the beginning of the insurgency in 2003. First, particularly prevalent in the early days of the conflict, was a "kinetic" approach to counterinsurgency. Taken somewhat by surprise by the fact of the insurgency and its intensity, the U.S. military reverted to its organizational and doctrinal propensity to address hostile action through the application of overwhelming force.[91] A second approach quickly emerged, partly in response to the first, which cast the Iraqi insurgency as a successor to the long line of insurgencies faced in the past by American and other Western militaries. According to this view, counterinsurgents in Iraq should be looking to the lessons learned in previous counterinsurgencies, such as those in Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam for guidance on their strategies and tactics.[92] This view has emphasized the centrality of winning hearts and minds in its traditional sense, focused on provision of security and good governance.

The third view, emerging in 2006 and 2007, has begun to question the applicability of traditional approaches to counterinsurgency, and has emphasized the differences between today's insurgents and those of the 20th century.[93] This view takes exception to the notion that defeating the Iraqi insurgency depends on winning hearts and minds, emphasizing the sectarian nature of much of the violence in Iraq and concluding that addressing material grievances will matter little in squelching the insurgency. For example, defense analyst Stephen Biddle has argued,

> The current struggle is not a Maoist 'people's war' of national liberation; it is a communal civil war with very different dynamics. . . Economic aid or reconstruction assistance cannot fix the problem: would Sunnis really get over their fear of Shiite domination if only the sewers were fixed and the electricity kept working?[94]

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[91] For two trenchant critiques of this propensity as implemented in Iraq, see Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), especially Chapters 8-9, and Nigel Aylwin-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review*, November-December 2005, pp. 2-15.

[92] For example, Ian F. W. Beckett, *Insurgency in Iraq: An Historical Perspective* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2005), pp. 2, 15-18; Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters*, Summer 2004, pp. 73-83; Andrew Krepinevich, "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2005; Melvin Laird, "Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2005; and Richard Lowry, "What Went Right," *National Review*, May 9, 2005.

[93] See David Kilcullen, "Counterinsurgency *Redux*," *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 4, Winter 2006-07, pp. 111-130; Edward Luttwak, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice," *Harper's*, February 2007; Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, June 2007); and Hoffman, pp. 71-87.

[94] Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006. Also see Ralph Peters, "The Hearts-and-Minds Myth," *Armed Forces Journal*, September 2006, for a shriller but directly relevant argument. Richard Betts also argues that "In Iraq, the conflict . . . is about identity rather than ideology." See "Blowtorch Bob in Baghdad," *The American Interest*, vol. 1, no. 4, Summer 2006, p. 36.

In a similar vein, the Coalition Provisional Authority's Governance Coordinator in al Anbar province in 2003-2004 concluded that "a good political settlement without economic aid can still lead to stability, while no level of macroeconomic support can produce stability absent a viable political process."[95]

In terms of the broad distinctions drawn in this chapter, the second view essentially presumes predominance of governance-driven motivations behind the insurgency, while the third presumes predominance of identity-driven motivations. A fourth view, which arguably has been adopted by the U.S. leadership in conjunction with General David Petraeus's arrival as the head of the military effort, seems to balance aspects of both the second and third views.

Which of these views, if any, is accurate? What kind of legitimacy is at stake in Iraq? And what should that mean for the policymakers charged with creating a successful counterinsurgency strategy? These questions are certainly far from settled at the time of this writing, and the facts on the ground continue to change. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the emerging history of the Iraq war provides rich opportunities for analysis of the issues raised here. Different Iraqi provinces and cities offer diverse combinations of key variables such as ethnic and religious dynamics and counterinsurgent strategies applied. Comparative analysis of cases studies drawn from experiences in Iraq should constitute a robust agenda for research over the next several years.

The Case for New Analysis

This chapter has tried to draw a clear distinction between the political dynamics of, on the one hand, government performance in meeting the needs of its citizens ("governance") and, on the other, ethnically and religiously driven group loyalties ("identity") as they relate to insurgency and counterinsurgency. At the same time, it has acknowledged that this distinction between governance and identity as potential bases for legitimacy is neither novel nor always stark in practice. It is reasonable to ask, then, why does this question merit further study? The preceding discussion reveals three crucial reasons.

1. Current counterinsurgency doctrine and policy continues to strongly reflect conventional wisdom that was forged in the 1950s and 1960s in response to formative experiences in that era, the heyday of Maoist people's wars, modernization theory, and Cold War great power competition.[96] In particular, the concept that "winning hearts and minds" is

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[95] Keith Mines, "Economic Tools in Counterinsurgency and Post-conflict Stabilization: Lessons Learned (and Relearned) in al Anbar, Iraq, 2003-04," E-Notes, Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 29, 2006.

[96] As a RAND Corporation report from 2006 asserted, "COIN theory (as opposed to lists of practices . . .) is almost entirely a product of the Cold War." Long, p. 21.

central to counterinsurgency strategy, while rhetorically flexible enough to transcend narrow interpretation, is, historically speaking, firmly rooted in this intellectual tradition.[97] Most significantly for this research, both the liberal and the communist sides of this tradition are relatively insensitive to the divisive potential of ethnic and religious identity politics in civil conflicts. This is true partly for diametrically opposed reasons: an emphasis on political pluralism in the liberal case; and a dedication to a singular cosmopolitan set of values in the communist case. But it is also partly true for a common reason: a materialist conception of social welfare, justice, and legitimate authority.

2. Most of the social scientific literature in this field has focused on explaining the causes of revolution and insurgency, not on the causes of success or failure in the conduct of counterinsurgency.[98]

3. The war in Iraq that began in 2003 presents new and unusually promising empirical opportunities to illuminate these issues. This will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 2.

In some sense, then, a theory of counterinsurgency strategy that is integrative of a diverse range of approaches to governance, identity, and legitimacy remains to be developed. This paper does not aspire to generate a full-fledged theory of this sort, and comparative case studies of Iraq are beyond its scope. But the following chapters are designed to help build a foundation for the empirical work that would be required to support a research agenda dedicated to these important problems.

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[97] In the words of one analyst, ". . . hearts and minds was the expression of an ideology promoting a specific ideal of governance (and modernization) . . ." Alice Hills, "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy? Controlling Civilians in Urban Operations," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 13, no. 2, Spring 2002, p. 8.

[98] Lomperis and Shafer, both cited above, are important exceptions. Lomperis, however, explicitly avoids comparing alternative conceptions of legitimacy in favor of experimenting with the interpretive utility of a single assumption regarding legitimacy (p. xi). Lomperis also focuses exclusively on "people's wars" and subscribes to the transition from "traditional" to "modern" societies as the primary cause of these types of insurgencies (pp. 59-66).

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II.   Research Design and Analytic Framework

Irregular warfare and the politics of ethnic identity clearly pose formidable analytical challenges. Relevant variables are legion, their interactions are complex, their descriptions subjective, and their associated data messy. As with other complex phenomena, great simplifications are sometimes necessary to make a given problem analytically tractable. The trick is to create a depiction of the world that is simple enough to make data available, questions coherent, and answers comprehensible – but no simpler than that. Such is the goal of this chapter.

The chapter is divided into four parts: 1) discussion and definitions of the central research question, hypothesis, and concepts to be addressed by the analytic framework; 2) discussion of considerations for case study selection; 3) presentation of an analytic framework for the study; and 4) discussion of metrics for key framework parameters.

Bounding the Problem – A Research Question, Hypothesis, and Definitions

Based on the notion advanced in Chapter 1 that counterinsurgents may have overestimated the value of improving governance in some circumstances, the most blunt research question that could be asked is simply:

Is providing good governance necessary to defeat insurgencies?

And the hypothesis that has been suggested in the preceding discussion is essentially that:

Operations conducted to provide good governance will contribute less to victory in counterinsurgency when identities are contested than when identities are uncontested.

Naturally, this is only one of many hypotheses that could be formulated to examine the issues raised in Chapter 1. However, this hypothesis is fundamental to the theoretical and strategic question at stake, and so provides a useful touchstone for building an analytic framework. The first methodological task that the question and hypothesis above prompts is to

define what is meant by the terms "good governance," "insurgencies" or "counterinsurgencies," "defeat" or "victory," and "identities."[1]

Good Governance

"Good governance" is defined here as effective and efficient administration of public services and allocation of public resources. As such, assessment of governance will focus on issues such as economic organization, public health, education, the justice system, sanitation, power, and water. Governance is a general enough term that the choice of this particular definition is worth a few extra words of clarification and justification, especially since this definition is narrower than some conceptions of governance, and yet broader than some others.

Most importantly, "good governance" is not used here in exactly the same way as it is often used in current literature and policy discourse on political and economic development. There, good governance carries such strong connotations of transparent, democratic, and liberal political institutions as to be almost synonymous with them.[2] There are two key reasons why this conception of good governance is not appropriate for the context of this research. First, this conception sets unreasonably high standards of performance for governments under siege by insurgencies, and in so doing defines the majority of cases of insurgency and counterinsurgency as outside the scope of the question. Second, this conception presumes an inextricable linkage between particular forms of political institutions and legitimacy (e.g. liberal democracy) that may not be universally valid. Therefore, while some semblance of a functioning political system is a necessary component of good governance as defined here, such features as elections and the separation of institutional powers are not.

In more operational terms, the World Bank tracks governance in six "dimensions:" 1) voice and accountability; 2) political stability and absence of violence; 3) government effectiveness; 4) regulatory quality; 5) rule of law; and 6) control of corruption.[3] These dimensions provide a closer approximation of what governance refers to in this research, but there are two very important differences. First, the definition used in this research expressly

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[1]   We enter this discussion duly chastened by Chalmers Johnson's warning that "the constructing of definitions at the outset is a sterile and often tautological balancing of many different impressions." *Revolution and the Social System* (Palo Alto, CA: The Hoover Institution, 1964), p. 2.

[2]   For example, see, Gita Welch and Zahra Nuru, ed., *Governance for the Future: Democracy and Development in the Least Developed Countries*, United Nations Development Programme, 2006, Chapter 1.

[3]   Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Massimo Mastruzzi, "Governance Matters V: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators for 1996-2005," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4012, September 2006. Another proposed measurement scheme for quality of governance that is generally consistent with this approach is in Robert I. Rotberg and Deborah L. West, "The Good Governance Problem: Doing Something About It," World Peace Foundation Report #39, 2004.

excludes the second of these six dimensions: security. As discussed at length later in this chapter, security in counterinsurgencies is both uniquely important and analytically problematic. For both of these reasons, it will be treated in this research as a separate factor from the other dimensions of governance. To be clear, the intent of the research design presented here is to test the utility of aspects of governance other than security in defeating insurgencies.

Additionally, the first of the World Bank's governance dimensions also requires some qualification as it relates to the definition used here. "Voice and accountability," or the idea that constituencies see themselves as having representation is an important part of governance (though note that this need not necessarily be provided via democratic elections). However, the existence of a mechanism for accountability does not equate to satisfaction with the representation itself. The particular distribution of power among constituencies is considered in this paper to be a separate variable from governance. At first glance, this may appear to be an overly subtle distinction, but it is truly at the heart of the issue under examination here. The existence of mechanisms for accountability speaks to how a government governs. The distribution of power across ethnic groups speaks to the issue of who governs.

Despite these important limitations in scope, the definition used here is broader than some definitions of governance, notably the one offered by the U.S. military's latest manual on counterinsurgency. There, governance is defined as one of six separate "lines of operation," which "relates to the host nation's ability to gather and distribute resources while providing direction and control for society." While the activities that the counterinsurgency manual identifies with governance are included in the definition used here, so are activities that the manual identifies with two other lines of operation: "essential services," dealing with the operation of power, water, sanitation, education, medical systems and the like; and "economic development," dealing with the supervision and regulation of a functioning economy that provides employment and creates and allocates resources.[4]

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[4] FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, pp. 5-14 to 5-17.

Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies

"Insurgency" is defined here as an indigenous military or paramilitary challenge to the sovereignty of a constituted government over all or part of its territory. Accordingly, "counterinsurgency" is the collective strategy and operations of a government and its allies that are aimed to defeat an insurgency.[5] This research design will also focus on a specific subset of conflicts between insurgents and counterinsurgents: those in which a significant counterinsurgent role is played by a foreign power.

Defeat and Victory

Defeat" and its counterpart, "victory," are notoriously difficult to define, and depend largely on a particular political point of view or point in time.[6] That said, the proceeding analysis will recognize defeat and victory in instances where explicit or imputed counterinsurgent objectives, commensurate with the geographic and temporal scope under consideration, are either demonstrably met and/or are judged to be met by key parties to the conflict. As will be addressed later in this chapter, "success" and "failure" will be easier concepts to apply to the case studies than "victory" and "defeat," in part because they allow for gradations of meaning and relative progress rather than absolute, definitive outcomes.

Identities

A recent paper on the methodological dimensions of identity in the social sciences concluded that "the current state of the field amounts to a definitional anarchy."[7] Other scholars have commented that the term "identity," as an analytical category, "tends to mean too much, . . too little, . . . or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)."[8] Part of this state of confusion,

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[5] These definitions are consistent with the U.S. military's doctrinal definitions of *insurgency* ("an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict") and *counterinsurgency* ("those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civil actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency"). Joint Publication 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* as amended through September 17, 2006. Other similar definitions of "insurgency" are in O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse, 2nd edition* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 15, and Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), p. 1.

[6] To wit, when Henry Kissinger asked Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai in 1975 for his judgment on the outcomes of the French Revolution, he replied, "It's too soon to tell." Quoted by John C. Gannon, Chairman, National Intelligence Council, in remarks at the World Affairs Council, Reading, PA, December 1, 1998.

[7] Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, "Identity as a Variable," *Perspectives on Politics*, vol 4, no. 4, December 2006, p. 3.

[8] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society*, vol. 29, no. 1, February 2000, p. 1.

no doubt, results from the variety of types of identity that operate in the variety of contexts relevant to the social sciences.

Mindful of these pitfalls, the first steps in narrowing down the concept for this paper are to say that the identities of interest here are those that are group-based, related to ethnic and religious affiliations, and are manifest in political behavior. As Chapter 1 made clear, the boundaries of ethnic and religious identities can only be established with any validity on a case by case basis. But as a starting point for distinguishing "identities" in this research, the definition of an ethnic group from the U.S. military's counterinsurgency manual will serve: "a human community whose learned cultural practices, language, history, ancestry or religion distinguish them from others."[9]

As with the delineation of group boundaries, the notion of "contested" identities will also be subject to context-specific interpretation. But the basic intent is to distinguish political environments where significant cleavages exist along lines of ethnic identities from those without such cleavages.[10]

Finally, an important definitional concern with identities is their potential for instability and evolution. For the purposes of this analysis, Robert Cox's observation is relevant, that "even if one assumes the social world is a constructed one, there may be periods and places where intersubjective understandings of these social facts are stable enough that they can be treated as if fixed and can be analyzed with social scientific methods."[11] As noted in Chapter 1, this seems especially applicable to the relatively short time frames (i.e. less than generational) of interest to counterinsurgents.

This paper, as noted in Chapter 1, does aim to provide insight into the validity of the often-cited sine qua non of successful counterinsurgency strategy, "winning hearts and minds." In some sense, exploring the relative claims to legitimacy of ethnic and religious identity versus expectations of good governance is tantamount to building a definition of "hearts and minds." Nevertheless, this particular terminology will be largely absent from the analysis. Trying to speak analytically of the "hearts and minds" of the "people" probably commits a logical error that historian David Hackett Fischer calls the "pathetic fallacy," that is, the "ascription of

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[9]   FM 3-24 / MCWP 3-33.5, p. 3-4.
[10] Note that "contested" here bears no resemblance to the framework element "contestation" in Abdelal et al. (pp. 16-20). They use this as a measure of group cohesion, essentially, so the more contested identity is, the less cohesive the group is. I use "contested" more as a measure of the salience of ethnic cleavages in society. Strengths of these two types of contestation, in fact, would likely have an inverse relationship.
[11] See Abdelal, et al, p. 17.

animate behavior to inanimate objects."[12] While "hearts and minds" may be useful shorthand in some contexts, it is distinctly opaque as an analytic category or as a strategic objective. As Fischer goes on to say,

> It is . . . problematical to locate the point at which the behavior patterns of individuals can be transferred to groups. . . Sometimes the intention is merely metaphorical. But it is an exceedingly doubtful and dangerous image to introduce into one's thought, for it has a way of spreading swiftly out of control.[13]

This seems an appropriate warning for analysts and strategists, alike, and is reflected in the research design presented here.

Case Studies

The analytic framework developed here is designed to support comparative analysis of multiple case studies. Chapters 3 and 4 in this paper present just such a comparative analysis. As noted in Chapter 1, however, the war in Iraq has generated some interesting opportunities for future comparative analysis that could also make use of the framework developed here. This section briefly outlines considerations for case selection both for the cases presented here and for future examination of Iraqi cases.

Historical Case Studies in This Paper

A few short historical case studies will serve two purposes in this paper. The first is to provide an opportunity to calibrate and refine the analytic framework and hypotheses discussed below. They will help to shore up the inevitable weaknesses in the research design's deductive scaffolding with some inductive insights from the rich history of modern counterinsurgency. Second, these case studies can stand, in a limited sense, as tests of the hypotheses in their own right. But they are abbreviated, based on secondary sources, and are intended to be analytically instrumental more than conclusive.

The focus here on "modern" counterinsurgency is due to the fact, noted in Chapter 1, that much of the history of counterinsurgency strategy was based on indiscriminate violence and brutal suppression against populations where insurgents were active. While the modern era is no stranger to these phenomena, the scope for such behavior is greatly diminished today, especially among liberal democracies such as the United States.

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[12] David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1970), p. 190.
[13] Ibid.

The three cases presented in Chapter 3 were selected with an eye toward covering the most important episodes among conflicts in which a significant counterinsurgent role was played by a foreign power. The cases considered will be the United Kingdom in Malaya (1948-1960); France in Algeria (1954-1962); and the United States in South Vietnam (1962-1973).

Iraqi Case Studies for Future Research

Apart from its clear historical importance and its relevance to near and mid-term policy considerations, Iraq provides unusually rich opportunities for comparative analysis of the issues addressed in this paper. Future research should try to exploit these opportunities, and the framework developed here is designed in part to support those future efforts. In particular, the Iraq war's analytic opportunities arise from a variety of combinations across the country of key variables of interest, such as ethnic and religious demographics and counterinsurgent strategies applied. In some cases, different organizations have been engaged in operations in very similar environments, with identical strategic goals, and yet have implemented different approaches to counterinsurgency. For example, both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps have fought extensively in the so-called "Sunni Triangle," but, at the outset of U.S. involvement there, had very distinct histories and doctrines with regard to counterinsurgency. Partly due to these differences, in the spring of 2004, the 1st Marine Division attempted to implement a very different approach to its operations than the Army units it relieved in Anbar province.[14]

Conversely, there have been instances where similar strategies were adopted by different organizations operating in environments that were quite different from one another. Both the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division and British forces pursued strategies with a heavy emphasis on good governance and economic reconstruction, with the former operating in multi-ethnic Baghdad and the latter in Shia-dominated Basra.

In many cases, partly due to the relative lack of preparedness and formal training for counterinsurgency, very different approaches were adopted even by different units of the same organizations. In some cases, operational planning and decision making was so decentralized that battalions within a single brigade and units responsible for the same locales at different times took very different approaches to achieving their operational objectives. Examining the experiences of different units through a comparative lens, therefore, promises to provide some robust evidence for the efficacy or hazards of certain policies, doctrine, or tactics.

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[14] Ahmed Hashim, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 327; Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. 319-320; and Bing West, *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah* (New York: Bantam, 2005), pp. 49-52.

Comparative analysis would, of course, need to be sensitive to the traditional considerations regarding case selection. In particular, "coverage" of different values for the most important relevant variables is necessary for effective comparative analysis. There are two limitations that affect this goal, however. First, the values of critical variables may not be obvious prior to conducting the case study.[15] Second, case selection ought to be blind to the values of the dependent variable so as to avoid a biased outcome based on a biased sampling of cases. At the same time, there is a risk of selecting a set of cases with no variation in the dependent variable, a condition that would tend to undermine the explanatory power of whatever results emerge.[16] Acknowledging no perfect way to square this circle, appropriate criteria for case selection might be the following, in order of importance: 1) availability of data; 2) discernible diversity in the values of the dependent variable; and 3) discernible diversity in values of independent variables that might support examination of natural experiments. If the resulting case set were to appear like a stacked deck, it would only be so by chance. Moreover, the limitation noted above about confidence in understanding variable values prior to the collection of the data should further mitigate concerns about selection bias.

Structuring the Problem – An Analytic Framework

To reiterate, the principal questions motivating this paper concern the dynamics of the key factors that contribute to defeating insurgencies. The dependent variable in these questions is insurgent defeat or, stated positively, counterinsurgent victory. If one were to build Iraqi case studies at the local or regional level, insurgency outcomes would need to be measured on that scale, not on a national one. Therefore, even if one were to consider the national counterinsurgency in Iraq a failure, it would still be possible to recognize successes at lower levels and at different points in time.

The first step in formally defining this problem should be to examine the basic causal logic usually hypothesized between counterinsurgency strategies and the ultimate defeat of insurgents. The next two sections take on this challenge, and are followed by a discussion of how this logic may be formalized through creation and organization of key variables.

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[15] For a discussion of this general problem, see Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2005), p. 112, including footnote 4.

[16] See Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 129-132.

In the most general sense, counterinsurgency strategy can be divided into two classes of activities: improving governance and providing security. As D. Michael Shafer describes, "[American counterinsurgency] doctrine emphasizes development and security. . . Without security, so the argument goes, development is impossible; without good government and economic progress, efforts to maintain it will be bootless."[17] Figure 1 below outlines this logic, with events labeled A-H and causal processes labeled 1-9. In event A, counterinsurgents attempt to improve governance through the variety of mechanisms discussed in the definition above. At the same time, they also conduct traditional security operations, including both police and military operations (event B). If improvements in governance are realized (event C via processes 1 and 2), then this is supposed to win popular loyalty and support for the government and thereby decrease popular support for the insurgency (event D). This should then cause the insurgency to decline (event G) both directly, as it is denied safe havens and recruits (process 5), and indirectly, as the population grows more cooperative with counterinsurgent security operations (events E and F and processes 6-8). Finally, the declining insurgency eventually results in a stable peace (process 9 and event H). This, in essence, is the conventional explanation offered by much of the academic literature and operational doctrine on counterinsurgency for an observed correlation between events A (attempts to improve governance) and H (a resulting stable peace).
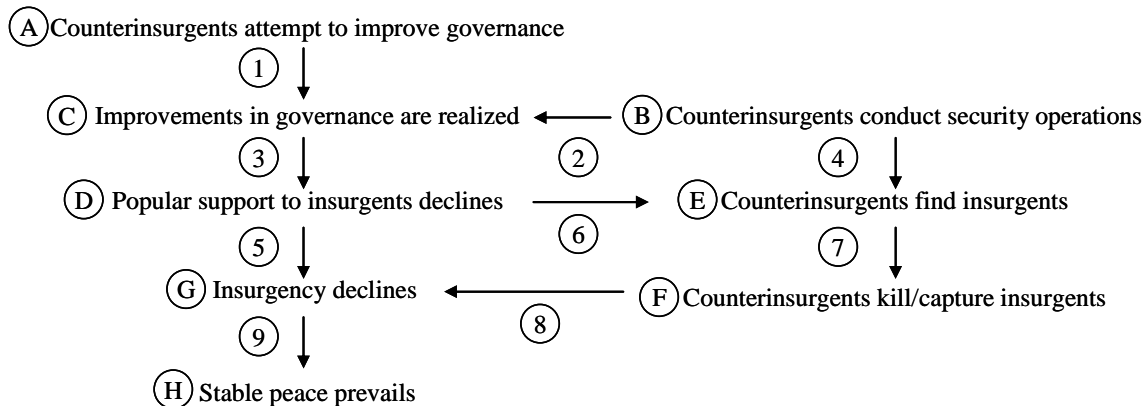

Figure 1: Basic Causal Logic of Counterinsurgency Strategy

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[17] D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 79 (emphasis in original). Other analyses employing two similar categories to describe counterinsurgency strategy include Jim Baker, "Systems Thinking and Counterinsurgencies," *Parameters*, vol. 36, no. 4, Winter 2006-07, pp. 26-43; Alice Hills, "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy? Controlling Civilians in Urban Operations," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, vol. 13, no. 2, Spring 2002, p. 6, and William J. Hurley, Joel Resnick, Alec Wahlman, *Improving Capabilities for Irregular Warfare (Volume I: Main Text)* (Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2007), p. II-3 and Appendix A.

If, however, we observe A but do not observe any evidence of H over time, we can infer that one or more of the causal processes in this chain has not operated as hypothesized. Specifically, what might those breakdowns be? Possibilities could be found in any one of the processes depicted in Figure 1, but this framework focuses particular attention on process number 3: the mechanism that translates improved governance into shifting loyalties among the affected population. For it is here that legitimacy is widely believed to reside and operate as a key instrument of the counterinsurgent. And it is here that conflicts involving identity may subvert the intended effects of improvements in governance on popular support for the insurgency.

One of the principal problems with legitimacy as an analytic construct, of course, is that it is an abstraction, and therefore very difficult to observe. A little like dark matter in astrophysics, it is recognizable primarily through its imputed effects. In the model depicted here, those effects would be visible in events E, G, and ultimately H. But this indirect inference of the causal role of legitimacy is problematic because each of these signal events (E, G, and H) can also be caused by events B, E, and F. Moreover, events B, E, and F can plausibly operate without significant contribution from the supposed chain of legitimacy building, events A, C, and D. For this reason, we cannot necessarily infer a causal relationship between events A and H, even when they are correlated. Perhaps this is one reason why, as Timothy Lomperis reported in his study of legitimacy and insurgency, ". . . in a personal letter to the author, Chalmers Johnson, a prominent scholar on revolution, warned against basing a study of insurgency on legitimacy because the concept is too 'intellectually traumatic.'"[18]

In fact, the conceptual challenge here is even thornier than this problem with legitimacy implies. An additional complication arises from the fact that security is both an important input and an important output of any counterinsurgency strategy. This has two troublesome logical implications.

First, the dependent variable, represented here as event H, "stable peace," may sometimes be difficult to distinguish from one of the key independent variables, the security operations depicted here as event B. Sharp reductions in the magnitude and frequency of insurgent violence represent probably the clearest available indicator of the overall success of a counterinsurgent effort. But such reductions can often be provided fairly readily, if only temporarily, with sufficient quantities of patrols by police or military forces. This kind of militarized security could hardly be described as a successful counterinsurgency, however. The real measure of

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[18] Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. xii.

success would have to be the relative absence of violence coupled with much smaller levels of force. Political scientist Jeffrey Race refers to these two different types of security as tactical and strategic security, respectively.[19] Distinguishing between the two empirically is certainly feasible, but it requires both explicit collection and interpretation of the data in these terms, and a considerable degree of subjectivity in that interpretation.

The second logical implication, following from the first, concerns process number 2 in Figure 1. This reflects the fact that improvements in security are likely to help allow improvements in governance to be realized in addition to, or instead of, the other way around. If an observed improvement in security could, in fact, be either event B or event H, then we cannot be sure whether event C is actually a cause of improved security or an effect. This potential for confusion about cause and effect is not simply a methodological problem, either. It is an operational problem that strikes at the heart of strategy and decision-making. As one reporter described this problem in relating the struggles of an American provincial reconstruction team in Baqubah, ". . . officials seemed unable to agree on whether poor security was preventing reconstruction or whether reconstruction failures had caused security to erode."[20] In such an environment, what is the strategist or the analyst to do?

Research Methods and Challenges of Causal Inference

For the moment, we must leave the strategist to fend for himself and focus on the needs of the analyst. The key to better understanding of complex phenomena such as these is in examining the detailed course of events in which the independent variables interacted to produce the outcomes of the dependent variable. This method for seeking detailed causal linkages is often referred to as "process tracing."[21] This approach is inevitably challenging to execute and generates inconsistent data across different times and locales. Nevertheless, a focus on this level of detail offers the only hope of being able to navigate reliably the ambiguities outlined in the previous section. An empirical focus on the national level, on simply establishing correlations among variables, or on achieving a large sample size for statistical analysis could not accommodate the interpretive burden demanded by the dynamics under examination here.

At the same time, there are interesting comparative analytic opportunities presented by Coalition operations in Iraq that future research could attempt to exploit. One of the advantages

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[19] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), p. 146.

[20] Solomon Moore, "A Promising Iraqi Province is Now a Tinderbox*," Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 2007, p. 1.

[21] For overviews of process tracing, see George and Bennett, pp. 205-232 and King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 85-87.

of considering multiple Iraqi cases is that a large number of contextual variables are automatically controlled. Comparative analyses of historical counterinsurgencies, such as those between Malaya and Vietnam,[22] are hampered by the large differences in context between cases.[23] With the case of Iraq, such important variables as the national political context, the role of neighboring countries and regional dynamics, and the prevailing technologies that shape communications, commerce, and warfare, are all very similar, if not identical, across the multiple local cases. Moreover, as described above, Iraq offers cases where different counterinsurgency strategies were attempted in areas with similar dynamics of ethnic political conflict; and it also offers cases where similar strategies were pursued in areas with quite different dynamics of ethnic political conflict.

All of these conditions suggest an opportunity to conduct a "controlled comparison," an analytic technique inspired by experimental science in which all conditions are held constant except for a single variable of interest. If changes in that single variable are shown to be correlated with differences in the dependent variable outcomes, then the comparison suggests a causal connection between the two variables. Also, even short of the restrictive conditional requirements of controlled comparison, Iraqi cases also offer the possibility of multiple "congruence" tests. With this method, "the investigator begins with a theory and then attempts to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case."[24]

These methods have the seductive quality of promising a link from the research's empirical work to theory building. But their attractiveness is limited because, for a variety of reasons, they provide only weak links from data to theory. The limitations for hypothesis testing of the "methods of elimination" underlying controlled comparisons, for example, have been well understood since John Stuart Mill gave them that name in 1843.[25] One problem arises simply from the complexity of many social phenomena. Complexity usually means that even cases that appear quite similar are different in ways that may remain unspecified by anything less than a

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[22] This has been a particularly popular comparison in the literature. See Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War; Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966); John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Sam Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993); and Robert G. K. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency; The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966).

[23] Bernard Fall was even less charitable about such comparisons, alleging that "any comparison between British victories in Malaya and the situation in Vietnam in the 1960s is nothing but a dangerous delusion, or worse, a deliberate oversimplification of the whole problem." Quoted in Robert W. Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of A Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, February 1972), p. 78.

[24] George and Bennett, p. 181.

[25] See ibid., pp. 153-160, and Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 56-58.

grand field theory of all the phenomena involved in the cases. This raises the possibility that variables omitted from the analysis actually account for case outcomes, either directly or through interactions with specified variables. Insurgency and counterinsurgency certainly qualify as complex problems in this sense. Outcomes are subject to influence by an analytically unmanageable number of interdependent factors. Theorists of complexity science have taken to calling such phenomena not just complex, but "wicked problems."[26]

A second challenge arises from the "equifinality"[27] (or "multiple causality"[28]) of the outcomes under examination. These terms refer to problems where multiple causal paths can lead to the same outcome. Warfare is a good example of this kind of problem, where victory in one war is not likely to result from exactly the same combination of factors as victory in a different war.

A third challenge, which is related to equifinality, is the lack of specificity in predictions made by many theories. As Stephen Van Evera describes, Einstein's general theory of relativity was widely considered confirmed by a single case study "congruence" test because it made a highly specific and unique prediction about the degree of apparent displacement of stars during a solar eclipse.[29] By contrast, hypotheses such as those addressed in this paper are not highly specific, and multiple plausible explanations may fit a given combination of variable values. The easiest way to address this problem is to narrow the focus of the dependent variable. For example, rather than asking "will we win the war?" we ask, "at what rate will we attrit enemy forces?" But in some instances, this approach amounts to asking the wrong question, and hence throwing out the substantive baby with the methodological bath water. This is something of a common curse for the strategist. As his questions become more integrative, they simultaneously become more important and less tractable.

In sum, the essence of the problem with hypothesis testing for the subject of this paper is that the variables of interest are not deterministic and they are not independent. The main methodological implication of this condition is that inferences of causation from correlations between independent and dependent variables are likely to be weak. But all is not lost. First, from the perspective of theory-building, as George and Bennett point out, "theories can be tested in two different ways: by assessing the ability of a theory to predict outcomes, and by assessing the ability of a theory to predict the intervening causal process that leads to outcomes."[30] For

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[26] Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 4, 1973, pp 155-169.
[27] George and Bennett, pp. 161-162.
[28] King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 87-89.
[29] Van Evera, pp. 66-67.
[30] George and Bennett, p. 209, n12.

research in this area, the second of these methods is likely to be much more important than the first. Second, and perhaps more important, such research need not be primarily exercises in theory-building in any case. If it presents new information, stimulates thinking along new paths and is suggestive of new knowledge, it will have succeeded in significant ways.

Identifying the Variables

The model of counterinsurgency depicted in Figure 1 is exceedingly simple. In the service of hypothesis generation and theory development, deductive reasoning could easily reveal additional layers of dynamics and complexity in the system at hand. However, an empirical research strategy demands a match between the analytic framework and the data that is available to make use of the framework. We must pay heed to Aristotle's admonishment that "it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits."[31] Therefore, the goal at this point is not to complicate the model, but rather to specify it and its variables with enough care to make it analytically functional. With this in mind, how can we formalize the main research question and hypothesis? The following few paragraphs outline the key variables that will be addressed. The next section discusses issues of measurement for describing these variables.

In its most general form, the dependent variable is clearly the outcome of an insurgency – a victory or a defeat for the insurgents. For any current Iraqi case studies, however, victory and defeat would have to be treated as directions rather than endpoints. A focus on local or regional cases within the larger national context prevents speaking strictly about outcomes for the whole insurgency. And, at least for the moment, counterinsurgency in Iraq has no resolution. Therefore, the dependent variable for any case studies would essentially be the change in prospects for stable peace within the geographic and temporal boundaries of the case. To emphasize this more general character of the dependent variable, it can be labeled "success" or "failure" rather than "victory" or "defeat."

The framework will address four independent variables. For simplicity, each of them is described here as binary, though in fact they should be thought of as continuous or categorical, accommodating multiple levels of assessment. The first independent variable addresses whether or not initiatives for improving governance, as that concept is defined earlier in this chapter, were attempted and achieved by the counterinsurgents. The second independent variable addresses the other main tool of counterinsurgency, security operations, and whether those operations were conducted with relative success and appropriate discrimination between hostile

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[31] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, Part 3.

and neutral targets. The third independent variable addresses whether the ethnic or religious identity of the governmental leadership in a given case was contested or not, that is, whether the identity of the leadership was a major factor in the grievances or evident motives of the insurgent forces.

Finally, the fourth independent variable raises an issue that has not been addressed in the discussion thus far: the presence of any significant effort on the part of counterinsurgents to establish power sharing mechanisms among ethnic or religious groups that are in conflict. Clearly, this factor would not be relevant in cases where identities were not contested. But in cases where identities were contested, pursuit of multi-ethnic power sharing mechanisms may provide one of the only alternatives to good governance in promising a stable political resolution to the insurgency. Whether or not this is the case, and, if it is, how these activities operate and affect the course of the counterinsurgency, comprise the final element of the formal analytic framework proposed in this paper.

These five variables (one dependent, four independent) are not the only factors to be considered in case studies, but they provide a focus for data collection and analysis. In this regard, each case study would, at a minimum, require collection and classification of data according to the scheme outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Main Data and Classification Requirements

Independent Variable	Data Required to Support Variable Classification
Good governance provided or not?	Quantity/types of governance-focused initiatives undertaken
	Effectiveness of governance-focused initiatives undertaken
Good security operations conducted or not?	Effectiveness of security operations
Identity of leadership contested or not?	Ethnic/religious composition
	Ethnic/religious dynamics
Multi-ethnic power sharing pursued or not?	Counterinsurgent treatment of multi-ethnic power sharing arrangements
Counterinsurgency successful or not?	Counterinsurgency outcome metrics

With these data for each case, a summary of outcomes in the format of Table 2 below can be constructed. Again, representing these variables as having either binary (yes or no) or meaningful quantitative values would be, respectively, crude or arbitrary. But for the purposes of clarifying the logic to be tested in the analysis of a few hypotheses, temporary suspension of disbelief on this point may be helpful.

Table 2: Notional Case Study Variable Summary

Cases	Independent Variables				Dependent Variable
	a (governance)	b (security)	c (identity)	d (pwr shrng)	y (success)
Case 1					
Case 2					
. . .					
Case n					

Assume the following symbols for each of the major variables:

a = good governance
b = good security operations
c = contested identity
d = power sharing
y = counterinsurgent success

Then assume that the values of all variables are either Yes (condition is not present) or No (condition is present). The following hypotheses (H) may then be specified, together with the combination of variable values that would provide supporting evidence for them.

H1: Good governance is not *necessary* for counterinsurgent success. Would be confirmed by: a=No, y=Yes.

H2: If identity is not contested, then good governance and good security are sufficient for counterinsurgent success. Would be confirmed by: a=Yes, b=Yes, c=No, y=Yes.

H3: If identity is contested, then good governance and good security together are not sufficient for counterinsurgent success. Would be confirmed by: a=Yes, b=Yes, c=Yes, y=No.

Variations and combinations of these hypotheses could also be constructed, but these represent the most important hypotheses relevant to the broader question of the paper in their simplest forms.

To reiterate a point from the previous section, correlations such as the ones posited here can only be suggestive of causal relationships. Alone, they do not provide strong evidence of causation. Accordingly, the framework presented here is intended as a point of departure for analysis, not a strict filter through which all insights from the research should be understood.

Metrics

Measurement of abstract phenomena such as governance, identity, and counterinsurgent success is inherently difficult. While no methodological panacea for this challenge exists, it is possible to achieve some degree of reliability in such measurement through the collection of perspectives of direct observers of, and participants in, the events being studied.

This kind of first-hand data is available in a few different forms: government and military archival resources such as after-action reports, lessons learned, and unit histories; extensive reporting by journalists of a diverse range of nationalities and perspectives; and interviews with military and civilian personnel with direct experience in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies. Ideally, a study employing the framework developed here would draw on all three of these types of sources. (Given the limited objectives of the case studies in Chapter 3, and the limited time available to conduct them, they are mostly based on secondary sources.)

Table 1 lists seven categories of data demanded by the analytic framework: quantity/types of governance-focused initiatives undertaken; effectiveness of governance-focused initiatives undertaken; effectiveness of security operations; ethnic/religious composition; ethnic/religious dynamics; counterinsurgent treatment of multi-ethnic power sharing arrangements; and counterinsurgency outcome metrics.

As discussed in the previous section, the last of these, the dependent variable, is perhaps the most important and the most difficult to get right. The definition of insurgent defeat offered in the first part of this chapter claims that defeat occurs if "explicit or imputed counterinsurgent objectives . . . are either demonstrably met and/or are judged to be met by key parties to the conflict." So, to some degree, the opinions of the counterinsurgent leaders matter as an outcome metric. But this is not sufficient. In more concrete, objective terms, what counts as "success"?

Security is the most obvious candidate metric. Event H in Figure 1, "stable peace prevails," represents the essence of this metric. But, to reiterate the earlier point, security is both an input and an output of counterinsurgency operations. Hence, simply using security as the dependent variable introduces a serious endogeneity problem into the research design. The hazard here is the potential for mistaking the direction of causation between the effectiveness of governance-related activities and the intensity of the insurgency. If success in the counterinsurgency is defined only according to the prevailing level of security, and some threshold level of security is necessary to execute governance-type measures, then there is some level of violence at which it is impossible to test any hypotheses about the effects of governance on levels of violence.

One possible response to this is to analyze only cases where the level of violence remains below this notional threshold. But this is probably impractical for many cases and would also have the drawback of excluding a significant portion of the problem from consideration. Another response would be to treat security as a trailing indicator, i.e. by comparing governance-related initiatives in month X to security in month X+2. This avoids confusion regarding the direction of causation and also probably better represents the nature of any expected effects.

Just as security serves as an input to counterinsurgency, so do some other candidate metrics that relate to governance. Metrics such as hours of functioning electricity or unemployment rates are sometimes used to measure progress. Indeed, for some purposes, these are helpful proxies. But from an analytic perspective, measuring success by such metrics is very similar to measuring success by insurgent body counts; that is, it assumes a connection between input and output that is plausible but only hypothetical.[32]

Another type of success metric that may also be helpful, but not necessarily reliable is polling statistics. The attitudes of the people subject to the insurgent-counterinsurgent competition toward those parties are surely relevant to the question of who is winning. But, on the other hand, analysts have often noted that, in the words of sociologist Timothy Wickham-Crowley, "'warm feelings' are of precious little value to a social movement."[33]

Ultimately, distinguishing between the short-term security provided directly by military and police operations from more sustainable, stable security requires either retrospect through significant passage of time, or the judgment of people intimately familiar with the evolving situation. Iraqi case studies, of course, would have to emphasize the latter, at least for the next several years.

Metrics for the other key variables should be more conceptually straightforward, if still not easy, to construct. Composition and dynamics of ethnic or religious identities may be derived from demographic statistics, local reporting, and participant interviews. It is important to recognize that group loyalties are not uniform across entire groups. As Henry Brady and Cynthia Kaplan point out, the "simple expedient of placing people into an ethnic category . . . assumes that ethnic identity is highly salient to group members, and it ignores subtle gradations of ethnic identity." [34] But it is also true that civil conflicts, such as insurgencies, tend to prompt greater salience of identities, and Brady and Kaplan find that "a highly salient ethnic identity

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[32] See Baker, p. 41.
[33] Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Guerillas and Revolution in Latin America: A Comparative Study of Insurgents and Regimes Since 1956* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 53.
[34] Henry E. Brady and Cynthia S. Kaplan, "Categorically Wrong? Nominal Versus Graded Measures of Ethnic Identity," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2000, p. 56.

puts in motion psychological forces that homogenize attitudes within a group."[35] Comparative case study analysis should attempt to be sensitive to the notion of gradation and variation in salience, but, given the nature of much of the available data, may only be able to do so in a general, qualitative sense.

Beyond identifying ethnic and religious identity groups, the analysis must also determine whether those identities are "contested" in the sense that the relationship between the government and one or more of those groups constitutes a major grievance among insurgents. In some cases, such as in parts of Iraq, this judgment may be rather self-evident. Still, there is value in being able to make this judgment somewhat more formally. Henri Tajfel, one of the pioneers of social identity theory, offers a useful set of criteria with which to identify distinctly intergroup behavior:

> First, at least two clearly identifiable social categories should be present in the situation (e.g., a Hutu and a Tutsi, a Catholic and a Protestant, a Serb and a Croat). Second, there should be little variability of behavior or attitude within each group. Intergroup behavior tends to be uniform (i.e., 'we' agree about 'them'), whereas interpersonal behavior shows a range of individual differences. Third, a member of one group should show little variability in his or her perception or treatment of members of the other group (i.e., 'they' are 'all alike').[36]

These criteria provide some general guidelines for making a judgment on the extent of "contestation" among identity groups.

In summary, the methodological challenges presented by research on governance, identity, and counterinsurgency are formidable. Even the most careful research design will yield conclusions that are tentative and suggestive rather than decisive. Nevertheless, the importance of the subject matter compels the work. It is worth emphasizing that the methodological challenges facing questions such as those posed here have parallels in the operational world. For example, the complexities of constructing a reliable dependent variable for success in counterinsurgency are more than academic. The counterinsurgent must wrestle with similar questions about defining success in order to build a rational, coherent strategy. Arguably, the harder it is to isolate such phenomena in a deliberative study, the harder it is likely to be operationally. In some sense, then, the plausibility of establishing the cause and effect relationships at issue here is a significant hypothesis being tested by this research. In this sense, inconclusive results would yield not only inconclusive conclusions, but also evidence that any policies depending on reliable understandings of the dynamics of governance, identity, and counterinsurgency should be undertaken with great modesty, indeed. Or they might even give

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Henri Tajfel, as summarized in Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, "Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict," in Daniel Chirot and Martin Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), p. 324.

greater weight to the idea that, to appropriate the words of analyst Tony Cordesman: "Not every game is worth playing, and sometimes the best way to win is not to play at all."[37]

Finally, any research of this kind must grapple with the forces exerted by two opposing intellectual poles: the generalizing impulse of the social scientist, and the particularizing impulse of the historian. By instinct, I am drawn to the historian's model of depicting a problem in its confounding complexity. But if the research is intended to yield meaningful policy implications, then this demands a good measure of social scientific inductive generalization. Perhaps the most appropriate approach is to stake out a middle ground along this spectrum. Any particular balance will inevitably leave some unsatisfied, but it should be the analyst's goal to do as little violence as possible either to the richness and complexity of the subject matter's empirical context or to the feasibility of applying whatever insights can be uncovered.

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[37] Anthony Cordesman, "Rethinking the Challenge of Counterinsurgency Warfare," Working Notes, Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 7, 2005, p. 3.

III.   Applying the Framework to Traditional Counterinsurgencies

This chapter has two related purposes. The first is to determine what light the paper's proposed analytic framework can shed on three of the most important foreign-supported counterinsurgencies of the 20th century. The second is to see what light those historical experiences can shed on the paper's proposed analytic framework. In other words, the cases will serve as limited tests of the paper's hypotheses, but also as tools for sharpening those hypotheses for use in future analyses.

The three cases presented here are those of the United Kingdom in Malaya from 1948-1960, France in Algeria from 1954-1962, and the United States in South Vietnam from 1962-1973. Selection of these cases was guided by several considerations. First, these three cases are among the very largest foreign-supported counterinsurgencies in history in terms of resources and manpower committed. (Though France was not technically a "foreign" power in Algeria, its role there strongly resembled that of a foreign power.) Second, as a group, these cases exhibit considerable diversity with regard to the dynamics of such key variables as the role of identity politics, the types of counterinsurgency strategies pursued, and the outcomes of the conflicts. Third, each case presents the perspectives and operations of a different country in the role of the counterinsurgent. Fourth, the three cases together span a 25-year period whose experiences formed the foundation of much of today's received wisdom regarding counterinsurgency. Fifth, as a result of all these factors, Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam are three of the most common sources in academic and policy discourse of "lessons" about insurgency and counterinsurgency involving foreign interventions. And finally, each of these cases features dimensions that make its relationship to the issues under examination in this paper somewhat more complicated than conventional wisdom might suggest. Together, these factors make a strong argument to dedicate the limited space and limited objectives of this chapter to an examination of Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam.

Each case is presented in seven parts covering the following topics: 1) a general overview of the context and major events of the conflict; 2) the role of ethnic and religious identity politics in the conflict; 3) counterinsurgent actions with respect to providing security; 4) counterinsurgent actions with respect to improving governance; 5) any multi-ethnic power-sharing arrangements; 6) an assessment of the outcome of the counterinsurgency; and 7) a concluding discussion and evaluation of the case.

Malaya, 1948-1960

Overview

The Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960 gave the world the expression "winning hearts and minds." Not coincidentally, the counterinsurgency conducted by British and Malayan forces and authorities during the Emergency is perhaps the most frequently cited model of successful counterinsurgency practice. The case is especially interesting for the purposes of this paper, because at first glance its basic facts seem to contradict one of the key hypotheses under examination: an insurgency with an important ethnic dimension that appears to have been defeated in significant part through the provision of good governance.

Malaya in 1948 was a collection of small states nominally ruled by ethnic Malay sultans, but together administered as a colony by Great Britain. Though the predominantly Muslim ethnic Malays were native to Malaya and were the country's largest ethnic group, they did not constitute a majority. At the time of the Emergency, the population of 6.3 million was about 44% Malay, 38.5% Chinese, 10.5% Indian, 5.5% aborigines, and 1.5% other.[1] During World War II, the Japanese defeat of the British in Malaya and Singapore and its subsequent occupation greatly disrupted political and economic life there. One beneficiary of this disruption was the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The MCP was born in 1930, but had struggled to gain support prior to the war. During the war, however, the MCP-based Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) became one of the primary vehicles for resistance, even collaborating with its former British colonial antagonists in fighting the Japanese occupation.

As a result, though the MPAJA was officially disbanded following the war, the MCP emerged as an important actor in the somewhat chaotic post-war Malayan political scene. Japanese occupation had not only weakened British political authority on the peninsula, but had also stoked ethnic tensions between Malay, Chinese, and Indian populations. Additionally, the war had generated a range of economic dislocations that provided ample opportunity for MCP agitation. In particular, the Communists were successful in gaining control of much of the growing labor union movement during the mid and late 1940s. By 1948, the MCP was sponsoring terrorist attacks in a fully-fledged revolutionary program against the Malayan government.

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[1] Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 12; and Sam C. Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 63.

In June of that year, a state of emergency was declared that was destined to last for twelve years. In his book on "the Emergency," former British Secretary for Defense in Malaya Robert Thompson divides those years into three phases: a "build-up" on both sides (1948-1952); a period which "saw the success of the measures taken and the military defeat of the insurgents" (1952-1954); and "mopping up of the remaining communist terrorist gangs" (1954-1960).[2]

Although the insurgents scored many early successes, they suffered from a few key weaknesses that aided the British and Malayan authorities in isolating them. First, active membership in the MCP and its guerrilla and political arms was relatively small. Second, the insurgency was almost entirely limited to Malaya's ethnic Chinese population. In 1950, MCP membership was approximately 12,000-13,000K, about 95% of which were Chinese.[3] Third, the insurgency was also relatively isolated geographically. It gained very little traction in the cities, and received almost all of its support from rural and plantation villages on the jungle fringe. In the end, the insurgents were unable to overcome these limitations in the face of a well-coordinated counterinsurgency effort whose principal elements were population resettlement, expansion of police and security forces, targeted improvements in governance and economic development, and the transfer of national sovereignty from Britain to a new and independent Federation of Malaya.

Was identity contested?

There is no question that the politics of ethnic identity were an important aspect of the Malayan Emergency. The strong concentration of the insurgency within the minority Chinese population imbued the entire movement with an ethnic character. Because of the MCP's initial roots in the Chinese community, and because of unresolved questions of minority rights and status following World War II, early conflicts between the MCP and the government tended to occur along ethnic fault lines. This early conflict, then, "sealed in the minds of Malays an identity of communism with the Chinese, and, therefore, as a threat to both Islam and the Malay community."[4]

And, indeed, ethnic cleavages and grievances in Malaya did have substantive roots. Many laws on citizenship, land ownership, and education were discriminatory against the

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2   Robert G. K. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency; The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966), p. 16.

3   Sarkesian, p. 126 and Robert W. Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of A Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, February 1972), p. 8.

4   Timothy J. Lomperis, *From People's War to People's Rule: Insurgency, Intervention, and the Lessons of Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 204.

Chinese. Moreover, many Malayan Chinese were unassimilated into Malayan life. Many were channeled in particular sectors of the economy, and many did not even speak Malay or English.[5]

Also, in a study involving interviews with dozens of former Communist guerrillas in Malaya, scholar Lucian Pye found racism to be endemic among the insurgents.[6]

At the same time, however, the doctrine and aims of the insurgency had very little to do with ethnic grievances or protecting Chinese political identity. The Communists' complaints, like those of their Leninist and Maoist role models, were principally about economic injustice. They railed against labor exploitation, shortages and high prices of rice, rising cost of living, low wages, and excessive economic management from London. As Richard Stubbs points out, "the MCP propaganda teams were skillful at highlighting [wage and labor grievances] and other issues, such as corruption, land tenure, and high rents."[7] And, while Lucian Pye found many insurgents to be racist, he did not find racism to be a generally important motivation for joining the MCP. Motivations tended to much more personal and materialistic, based on issues like on standard of living, underemployment, career prospects, and even boredom.[8]

The MCP also made significant efforts, albeit with little success, to broaden its appeal to Malay and Indian communities. One clear symbol of this aspiration is the name of the MCP's military arm, which was chosen expressly to emphasize the cross-communal nature of the Communist objectives: the Malayan Races' Liberation Army (MRLA). In 1951, during the course of a thorough rethinking of its strategy, the MCP issued a directive admonishing itself for "failing to distinguish between the 'big national bourgeoisie,' who were implacably opposed to communism, and the 'medium national bourgeoisie,' who were often fence-sitters and who could be won over to a broadly based united front." Another instruction issued in the same time period directed that "Malays and Indians were to be more actively recruited and Chinese cadres were ordered to cease treating them as inferiors; this was considered a form of 'nationalist deviation.'"[9]

By the same token, the Malayan Chinese population was far from united behind the Communist insurgents. One major split within the Chinese population was between the so-called "Straits Chinese" who had been in Malaya for generations and were highly assimilated, and the

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[5] See Sarkesian, pp. 60-61, Stubbs, pp. 117-118, and Riley Sutherland, *Winning the Hearts and Minds of the People: Malaya, 1948-1960*, Memorandum RM-4174-ISA (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 1964), p. 7.

[6] Lucian Pye, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya: Its Social and Political Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 207-210.

[7] Stubbs, p. 90.

[8] Pye, pp. 210-237.

[9] Stubbs, pp. 152-153.

recent immigrants who had a wide range of affiliations and degrees of loyalty to Malaya. Perhaps even more important was the split between the mostly urban "towkay" or merchant classes and the mostly rural laborers in agriculture, tin mining, and rubber plantations. The merchants tended to sympathize with the anti-Communist Kuomintang forces in China and "were basically loyal [to the Malayan government] as long as their business interests were protected by the local and colonial elites."[10] Chinese businessmen, who together owned mines and plantations generating almost half of Malaya's tin and rubber output,[11] had a great deal to lose from the instability caused by the insurgency, not to mention from a successful Communist takeover.

Also, many Chinese were undoubtedly fence-sitters, waiting to see which side would prevail. Political activism was not historically a characteristic of the Chinese community. Sun Yat Sen quipped that they were politically "like a plate of loose sand."[12] One of Britain's High Commissioners in Malaya, General Sir Geoffrey K. Bourne, judged that many Chinese had "a foot in each camp, and that they might just have waited passively for the outcome of the insurrection if they had not been won over to the idea of a multiracial Malaya."[13]

Perhaps the most striking evidence of division within the Chinese community is the fact that, as of April 1952, 1,250 of 1,942 (64%) civilians killed by the MRLA were Chinese.[14] This dynamic of the insurgency, probably more than any other, helped convince the peasants that, in Sam Sarkesian's words, "the MCP was engaged in a power struggle with the British-Malay government, not necessarily for the betterment of the Chinese but for the privilege of ruling over them."[15]

Overall, for the purposes of this analysis, was ethnic identity "contested" in the Malayan Emergency? In the broadest sense, it certainly was. Ethnic cleavages were important to the roots and the development of the insurgency and the counterinsurgency. But the insurgency was not truly based on these cleavages. The MCP attempted to create a class-based Leninist revolution, and then, having failed in that goal, to create a protracted Maoist peasant revolution. It spoke little about Chinese ethnic unity, terrorized Chinese populations more than any others, and lamented its inability to recruit Malays and Indians to its cause. Malay-Chinese relations during the Emergency meet only one of Henri Tajfel's criteria mentioned in Chapter 2 for

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[10] Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics 2nd Edition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004), p. 72; and Richard L. Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War; Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 69.
[11] Pye, p. 12.
[12] Quoted in Stubbs, p. 29.
[13] Sutherland, p. 11.
[14] Lomperis, p. 210.
[15] Sarkesian, p. 69.

identifying distinctly intergroup behavior: clearly identifiable social categories were present, but there was great variability in both the behavior within the groups, and in each group's perceptions of the other.[16] So, while identity may have been contested, it was contested only weakly in the sense most relevant to this analysis.

Were good security operations conducted?

Security operations conducted by British and Malayan forces were extensive and, over time, generally quite effective. Measures implemented in the earliest days of the Emergency were often blunt, approaching the insurgency more as a criminal problem than as a political one. Laws instituted through the state of Emergency widened the authority of police and military forces though a variety of measures, such as registration of all adult citizens, temporary abandonment of habeas corpus, right of search without warrant, heavy sentences for illegal weapons possession, severe sentences for assisting the Communist propaganda effort, and expanded rights to impose curfews.[17] Another key early initiative was a large expansion of police forces. The number of federal police nearly tripled from 1948 to 1952, and the ranks of local "Home Guard" police units swelled from 17,000 in 1948 to 152,000 in 1955.[18]

The first couple years of the Emergency were marked by large military operations, incompetent police work and a great deal of indiscriminate brutality on the part of the government. Chinese villagers sometimes even commented that the British were more brutal than the Japanese.[19] But British forces soon adapted their operations to the threat, focusing more on intelligence collection and small-unit operations,[20] an approach that ultimately allowed them both to kill and capture more insurgents, and to antagonize the local populations less.

Undoubtedly, the centerpiece of the government's strategy for providing security to populations affected by the insurgency was the resettlement of several hundred thousand people in protected enclaves which came to be called "New Villages." This key element of the "Briggs Plan" was highly disruptive for its resettled people, but had the dual benefit of creating more defensible population centers and of isolating the insurgents from much of their support bases for

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[16] Henri Tajfel, as summarized in Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, "Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict," in Daniel Chirot and Martin Seligman, eds., *Ethnopolitical Warfare: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), p. 324.

[17] Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975), p. 566; and Komer (1972), pp. 34-37.

[18] Komer (1972), pp. 38-41.

[19] Stubbs, p. 76.

[20] See John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 77-107; and Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency 1919-1960* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 162-167.

food and other supplies. As the Briggs Plan author and the colonial government's Director of Operations Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs argued, resettlement "is not the final objective, but affords only that measure of protection and concentration which makes good administration practicable."[21]

The resettlement program was not immediately or fully successful in providing better security to the predominantly Chinese villagers who had been resettled. But the combination of the program with the large expansion in local police forces made insurgents' efforts to intimidate, coerce, indoctrinate and recruit villagers much more difficult. British Brigadier Richard Clutterbuck judged the village policeman to be "the decisive character in this drama."[22]

Was good governance provided?

Apart from providing greater security, and physically separating the insurgents from the civilian population, improving governance was the central goal of the New Villages resettlement program. In one sense, this was a simple goal because governance among the rural Chinese at the beginning of the Emergency was so minimal. In many villages on the jungle fringe, Malayan government activity was so sparse that some believed control of their areas had been ceded to the MCP following the Japanese occupation.[23] Seventy percent of the surrendered guerrillas interviewed in Lucian Pye's study "perceived the colonial administration as existing completely apart from the Chinese community in Malaya. The government operated in distant and limited spheres, and they could not always comprehend how its acts might impinge upon their daily lives."[24] Many rural villages were governed de facto by cells of the "Minh Yuen" or the MCP's "People's Organization."

As a result, Briggs believed the essence of the war in Malaya to be (as Richard Clutterbuck describes),

> . . . a competition in government. He aimed not only to resettle the squatters but to give them a standard of local government and a degree of prosperity that they would not wish to exchange for the barren austerity of life under the Communists' parallel hierarchy; in other words, to give them something to lose.[25]

Thus began the campaign, executed in earnest beginning in 1952 under Sir Gerald Templer, to win the war by "winning the hearts and minds of the people." Richard Stubbs

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[21] Quoted in Mockaitis, p. 115.
[22] Clutterbuck, p. 70.
[23] Stubbs, pp. 78-79.
[24] Pye, p. 201.
[25] Clutterbuck, p. 57.

summarizes the criteria that Templer established by which New Villages would be judged "properly settled" as follows:

> a modicum of agricultural land and the granting of long-term land titles, an adequate water supply, a reasonably well-functioning village committee, a school which could accommodate at least a majority of the children, a village community centre, roads of passable standards and with side drains, reasonable conditions of sanitation and public health, a place of worship, trees along the main street and padang, an effective perimeter fence, a flourishing Home Guard, a reasonably friendly feeling toward the Government and police, and the beginning of certain activities such as the Scouts, Cubs, and Girl Guides.[26]

The efforts to achieve these standards, while uneven, met with a great deal of success, both in improving governance and quality of life and in winning loyalty toward the government. As Riley Sutherland concludes,

> Governmental prestige rose as the public witnessed the amenities of life in the new villages with their well-organized after-care program and felt the effects of such new developments as irrigation and drainage projects; farm loans and other agricultural support measures; regulation of the formerly backward labor conditions, work hours, and money lending practices; the encouragement of consumers and producers cooperatives; the growth of labor unions; a greatly improved education system with a concomitant rise in student enrollment; the opening up of the diplomatic, military, and civil services to all Malayan citizens under liberalized conditions of admission; and the opportunities for direct acquaintance with the workings of government through the week-long 'civics courses' attended by representatives of all racial and economic communities.[27]

In sum, good governance was a very important aspect of the British and Malayan counterinsurgency strategy, and the execution of this aspect of the strategy was largely effective.

Was multi-ethnic power sharing pursued?

One of the most important developments in Malaya during the Emergency was the formation of a political alliance between the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA).[28] Each of these major political parties was born in large part from sectarian political interests, with the UMNO based in the Malay population, and the MCA in the Chinese population. Nevertheless, a combination of genuine inter-ethnic common interests and electoral pragmatism resulted in an alliance between the two parties that began in 1952 and proved to be the dominant force in Malayan politics in the country's march toward independence in 1957.

Among the key foundations of this alliance was the creation of the MCA, itself, in 1949. Prior to that point, disparate elements of the Malayan Chinese community were not politically

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[26] Stubbs, p. 173.
[27] Sutherland, p. viii.
[28] See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 398-427.

organized, leaving limited formal alternatives to the Communist party for Chinese political activism. But, as noted above, a large number of Malayan Chinese were not at all supportive of the Communists. The MCA served as a focal point for these Chinese, who then participated extensively in supporting government policies in the New Villages and in building a multi-ethnic national Malayan vision.

Another critical factor in the success of the UMNO-MCA alliance was the unifying effect of Britain's commitment to Malayan independence. Templer's tenure began in 1952 not only with his commitment to improving governance among the Chinese villagers, but also with a firm statement from London that "The policy of Her Majesty's Government in Great Britain is that Malaya should in due course become a fully self-governing nation." Moreover, the British also laid out an explicitly multi-ethnic vision for the country: "Her Majesty's Government will not lay aside their responsibilities in Malaya until they are satisfied that communist terrorism has been defeated and that the partnership of all communities which alone can lead to true and stable self-Government has been established."[29] As an important early step in reconciling ethnic conflicts, the Malayan government liberalized its citizenship laws in September 1952, thereby granting citizenship to over a million Chinese.[30]

The combination of these British policies and the success of the UMNO and MCA in negotiating a shared approach to national politics and policy not only helped to dissipate ethnic tensions, but also undoubtedly sapped support for the MCP and its insurgency.

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

By almost any measure, the counterinsurgency in Malaya was successful. Even before the official end of the Emergency in 1960, insurgent attacks had all but disappeared, and the MCP had ceased to operate as anything resembling a coherent, effective organization. From its estimated peak strength of 12,000-13,000 members, the MCP declined to about 7,000 in 1951 and to 2,000 in 1957. Similarly, insurgent incidents declined from almost 500 per month in 1950-51 to about 100 per month as early as 1953.[31] "White areas," villages where sufficient progress had been made in eradicating insurgents to suspend the Emergency regulations, spread steadily up the peninsula from 1953 onward.

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[29] Quoted in Stubbs, p. 144.
[30] Ibid., pp. 189-190.
[31] Komer (1972), pp. 9-10.

Evaluation

It is no surprise that Malaya is often held up as a model of successful counterinsurgency strategy. All the factors that ostensibly support effective counterinsurgency were in place, including those that are the focus of this analysis: good governance, security operations, and power sharing arrangements among competing ethnic groups.

At the same time, however, this multiplicity of positive factors limits the interpretive utility of the Malayan case for drawing broader conclusions about counterinsurgency strategy. The effects of any one set of factors is somewhat obscured by the presence of others. Therefore, from an analytical perspective, it is difficult to come to any conclusion more refined than the one Robert Komer proposes, that "No one element was decisive. Success was achieved by the meshing of many civil-military programs, each of which interacted with the others."[32] Moreover, several unusual and favorable conditions beyond the factors considered formally in this framework made significant contributions to the victory of the British and Malayan governments. Chief among them were the absence of outside support for insurgents, the relative geographic isolation of the insurgents, and the boom in tin and rubber exports sparked by the Korean War, which buoyed the Malayan economy considerably during the most critical years of the Emergency.

For the purposes of this analysis, the most provocative aspect of the Malayan case is the apparent effectiveness of governance-related counterinsurgency efforts in the New Villages in the face of a conflict with significant ethnic dimensions. But ultimately, grievances related to ethnic identity were not the source of the Communist insurgency and their redress was not its main objective. To the extent MCP objectives addressed group identities, they did so in opposition to British colonial rule, a grievance that was completely co-opted by Britain's 1952 commitment to grant Malayan independence.

Overall, to the extent that General Sir Harold Briggs was correct in conceiving of the war in Malaya as a "competition in government," it is clear that the British and Malayan governments "outgoverned" the insurgents. However, given the variety of other factors that also contributed to the counterinsurgent victory there, the indispensability of this factor cannot be established with great confidence.

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[32] Ibid., p. 76.

Algeria, 1954-1962

Overview

Algeria won its independence from France in large part by means of an insurgency waged over the years 1954-1962. The Algerian war was not only one of the largest and most ferocious of the anti-colonial wars following World War II, it also presents particular interpretive challenges to the counterinsurgency analyst due to France's unusual mix of successes and failures.

Algeria was first occupied by France in 1830 and had become incorporated as an integral part of France in 1848. In 1954, approximately ten million people lived in Algeria. Almost nine million were indigenous Muslims, ethnically divided between Arabs and Berbers. The remaining million were of European origin, generally known as "colons" or "pieds noirs" ("black feet"). As in so many other cases of European rule outside Europe, the French had imported a great deal of modern technology, culture and political organization to Algeria, but standards of living, economic privilege and balance of political influence heavily favored the European population over indigenous Muslims.

Several years of rising frustration with and revolt against French rule culminated in 1954 with the formation of the Front de Liberation Nationale (National Liberation Front), or FLN, a revolutionary organization committed to winning Algerian independence. The FLN launched the war in November of that year with coordinated attacks on several French targets, accompanied by a formal proclamation of its revolutionary goals.

Though the first wave of attacks achieved little tactical success, the French reaction was swift and severe. Unlike most European conquests, Algeria was technically not a colony, but was rather legally part of France, itself. As a result, French opinion ran very strongly against Algerian independence. As one commentator noted, "Up to 1956, the only point on which virtually the whole of France was united was that Algerian independence was unthinkable and unmentionable."[33] Another factor shaping the French response was the French Army's catastrophic defeat by anti-colonial insurgent forces at Dien Bien Phu and France's subsequent departure from Indochina only months before the FLN's first attacks. At the outset of the war, military and political leaders alike were determined not to allow another such defeat.

In the first few years of the conflict, French security forces enjoyed a great deal of success in severely restricting the insurgents' freedom of action. Two tools that were key to

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[33] Dorothy Pickles, quoted in Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, (New York: New York Review Book, 2006), p. 234.

French progress were strong control of Algeria's borders with Tunisia and Morocco and the application of a "quadrillage" system, whereby the country was divided into something of a checkerboard organized by a combination of fixed military outposts and mobile units charged with pursuit of insurgent forces within specific zones. These setbacks prompted the FLN to shift is focus from the countryside to urban terrorism, prompting, in part, what came to be known as the "Battle of Algiers," from late 1956 through late 1957. In this phase of the conflict, too, French forces managed to dismantle the FLN's network, ending in a decisive defeat for the insurgents and the restoration of calm to Algiers.

At the same time, however, the brutality of the war, especially the French Army's use of torture, had begun to turn some international opinion against French rule in Algeria. Most importantly, a gap had opened between the French government on the one hand and the military and the Algerian pieds noirs population on the other regarding how to address the ongoing insurgency and about the long-term viability of French control of Algeria (so-called "l'Algerie Francaise"). In 1958, this split culminated in a political crisis that brought down the French government and brought to power a new regime under Charles de Gaulle.

Initially, the pieds noirs believed that de Gaulle would strongly support l'Algerie Francaise, and indeed, de Gaulle did initiate a new, aggressive counterinsurgent program under new leadership. However, de Gaulle, reflecting the feelings of a growing portion of the French public, proved to be ambivalent on the subject, and by 1959 had begun referring to the need for Algerian "self-determination." Historian Alistair Horne refers to de Gaulle's first public speech regarding self-determination as "one of the most decisive events of the whole war."[34] From this point forward, what had been a fairly one-sided military conflict between French and FLN forces began a transformation into a political conflict within the French government and military over the proper trajectory of French rule in Algeria.

In the end, this was the conflict that came to define the outcome of the Algerian war. Opposition to de Gaulle among the French authorities in Algeria prompted major political unrest among the pieds noirs in 1960, followed by attempted coups in January and April of 1961 and by terrorist attacks by French citizens against French citizens in both Algeria and France in 1961 and 1962. Finally, de Gaulle reached an agreement on independence with the FLN in March 1962 and the majority of the pieds noirs were forced to flee Algeria in June of that year.

In the eight years of war, casualties totaled 17,456 in the French military, 3,663 among European civilians, and 30,034 indigenous people were killed by the FLN. Estimates of those killed by the French and their supporting forces range from 158,000 to one million. Tens of

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[34] Horne, p. 346.

thousands of Muslims were killed after independence as well, many in exchange for their having supported French rule.[35]

Was identity contested?

Conflict over the politics of ethnic identity was central to the Algerian war. As Horne argues, "In order to understand events from 1954 onwards, it is necessary to accept the existence of three totally distinct peoples – the French of France, the French of Algeria, and the Muslims of Algeria."[36] The opposing claims on each side of the conflict were fairly transparently rooted in the political prerogatives of their respective ethnic groups. The Algerian French, in sociologist Eric Wolf's words, "were at one in defense of their privileges which made the lowest French [citizen] the superior of any Arab. Their unity was the product of their common fear of the Muslim majority."[37]

Algerian Muslims, however, were not at all united in opposition to French rule. One contemporary analyst estimated that at the beginning of the war, the non-European population in Algeria was "20 percent for the insurrection, 20 percent for the maintenance of French order, and 60 percent undecided."[38] Before the war, there had been a significant "assimilationist" element among Algerian Muslims, which sought to draw French and indigenous cultures closer together under French rule. Nevertheless, the pieds noirs' repeated "inability and unwillingness to grant concessions in time spelled the end of the assimilationist cause."[39]

On the other side of the conflict, the insurgent movement was quite explicitly and uncompromisingly aimed at Algerian national independence from France, not at any lesser goal of political, economic, or social reform. No better expression can be found of this than the FLN's initial proclamation of November 1954 which states: "GOAL: National Independence through . . . restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social, within the framework of the principles of Islam . . ."[40]

And, while many French accused the FLN of Communist sympathies and motivations, in fact, communist ideology had very little to do with the motivations of the Algerian insurgency. In Horne's judgment, "Marxist materialism was at least as alien to the FLN ethos as were other

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[35] Ibid., p. 538; and Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents Since 1750* (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 167-168.

[36] Horne, pp. 53-54.

[37] Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the 20th Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 224.

[38] Constantin Melnik, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 23, 1964), p. 279.

[39] Wolf, p. 236.

[40] Proclamation of the Algerian National Front, Liberation Front, November 1954.

external Arab ideologies . . . The FLN had always been quite unyielding in never accepting Communists into their ranks as a 'block membership.'"[41]

Of course, socio-economic grievances were not absent from the FLN cause. In 1955, France's Governor-General for Algeria, Jacques Soustelle, described the way in which these challenges interacted with the grievances related to ethnic identity:

> The population growth of an essentially agricultural country with unfertile soil and a difficult climate, has produced chronic unemployment, the desertion of the countryside for working class suburbs, extreme poverty and despair for a growing mass of individuals and families. While this underprivileged proletariat is increasing in number and growing daily more bitter, a small Moslem bourgeoisie, educated through contact with us, is vainly seeking a solution not only economic, but above all administrative and political. However, they cannot find this solution. The number of Moslems in the administration is still infinitesimal. . . Hence a dual dissatisfaction: the social unrest of the masses and the political unrest of the elite. At the point where they meet, these two forms of unrest constitute a very strong explosive force.[42]

Another important caveat regarding ethnic conflict in Algeria is the large number of Algerian Muslims who fought in the war in defense of French rule, generally thought to be significantly more than those fighting for the FLN.[43] As noted above, Muslims were not united. Nevertheless, the key point is that identity was clearly the most important basis for the insurgents' claims to legitimacy and was the key issue at stake in the war.

Were good security operations conducted?

In Malaya, British and Malayan authorities pursued security and improved governance very much in parallel. In Algeria, the French strategy clearly favored security over governance. One of the central elements of this security-oriented strategy was the deployment of large numbers of military forces. From the beginning of the insurgency in 1954, France committed half a million troops to Algeria, in part by lengthening mandatory service times and recalling large numbers of reservists.[44] These troops opposed an FLN insurgent force that was probably less than 30,000, many of whom were in Tunisia, not even in Algeria.[45] Another key to the French security strategy was their system of "quadrillage," whereby the Algerian countryside was divided up into a checkerboard of fixed outposts that delineated various zones of operation. Over time, the quadrillage system of combining garrisoned forces at the outposts and mobile

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[41] Horne, p. 406.
[42] Quoted in Melnik, pp. 12-13.
[43] See Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), p. 127; and Melnik, p. 3
[44] Horne, p. 151.
[45] Beckett, p. 162.

strike forces operating from the outposts was quite effective in suppressing insurgent activity throughout the countryside.

Additionally, French forces succeeded in controlling Algeria's border with Tunisia, where thousands of FLN forces and supporters maintained sanctuary. By September 1957, they completed a formidable physical barrier known as The Morice Line, which featured electrified fences, minefields and extensive patrolling. According to historian Ian Beckett, "By April 1958, the kill ratio of those trying to infiltrate into Algeria from Tunisia was reportedly 85 per cent, after which few attempts were made to do so."[46]

As in Malaya, another important component of the counterinsurgency strategy in Algeria was the resettlement ("regroupement") of large numbers of rural peasants into secured villages. As with Malaya's "new villages" and South Vietnam's "strategic hamlets," the purposes of the resettlements were to protect the population from the insurgents and to isolate the insurgents from their support among the population. By 1960, something like two million people had been resettled in such villages.

While the resettlement program enjoyed significant success in isolating FLN insurgents, it also generated a great deal of ill will against French forces and French rule. Conditions in the villages were generally quite poor. One journalist, writing in 1958, described them this way:

> Crammed together in unbroken wretchedness, fifteen to a tent since 1957, this human flotsam lies tangled in an indescribable state. . . At the moment, the whole population is fed entirely on semolina. Each person receives about four ounces of semolina a day . . . Milk is given out twice a week: one pint per child . . . No rations of fat have been distributed for eight months. No rations of chick-peas for a year . . . No rations of soap for a year . . . [47]

In Horne's estimation, "by uprooting these Algerians from their homes and fields and placing them in camps where they led listless and largely unemployed existences, the French only created a new area of profound social discontent . . ."[48]

Another double-edged sword in France's approach to establishing security was its aggressive, even brutal, law enforcement tactics. Most infamously, French paratroopers murdered and tortured many suspected insurgents during the "battle of Algiers." According to one estimate, 3,000 of the 24,000 arrested in this phase of the insurgency disappeared while they were in detention.[49] And throughout the counterinsurgency, French security forces indulged in many excesses of indiscriminate violence.

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[46] Ibid., p. 164.
[47] Quoted in Horne, p. 220.
[48] Ibid., p. 221.
[49] Beckett, p. 165.

Such tactics did produce many positive results for the French side, including improved intelligence and intimidation of potential insurgent recruits. But they also sacrificed much good will among the moderate Muslim population in Algeria and among many observers outside Algeria, especially among French citizens in France. Horne relates a story that helps to sum up the trade-offs involved in this kind of brutality. In 1957, a French officer visiting Orleansville on temporary leave from his job improving government services and living conditions in the countryside, encounters a band of rampaging paratroopers, wrecking shops and harassing Muslim civilians. "You band of little idiots," he tells them. "You're doing exactly what the FLN terrorists count on you doing . . . Two months of [my] work . . . are wrecked in one evening like this."[50]

Nevertheless, in terms of rolling back the FLN's ability to operate effectively in Algeria, French forces were extremely successful. As of late 1957, after the completion of the Morice line and the eradication of FLN cells in Algiers, the insurgency was "on the defensive and could not undertake the conquest and control of a part of the territory which would have been a logical phase in the evolution of this type of situation and which the FLN had dreamed of accomplishing . . ."[51] In 1960, one officer reported to his commander that "We have pacified the country so well that the [insurgents] have almost disappeared. Nowadays, almost no one joins the guerrillas. It is more practical to stay put and campaign for independence in a thousand legal ways."[52]

Was good governance provided?

As noted, France's counterinsurgency in Algeria was influenced heavily by its army's recent defeat in Indochina at the hands of Ho Chi Minh's communist insurgents. In particular, many French officers believed that the principal lesson of that defeat was that counterinsurgency strategy should incorporate a better understanding of the principles of Maoist people's wars. The doctrine that began to develop around this understanding, known as "la guerre revolutionnaire," emphasized the centrality of popular support to achieving victory.

Though not formally adopted into French Army doctrine, this philosophy became highly influential during the war in Algeria. As a result, considerably more attention was paid to the quality of governance in Algeria than in Indochina. As Beckett describes, ". . . many French officers interpreted guerre revolutionnaire as a genuine social revolution to win the support of the

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[50] Horne, p. 173.
[51] Melnik, p. 29.
[52] Horne, p. 337.

population, and some critics were even to accuse advocates of the new doctrine . . . of practicing rural socialism."[53]

However, guerre revolutionnaire also tended to place at least as much emphasis on manipulation of perceptions as it did on addressing grievances as a method of winning popular support. As a result, French operations tended to emphasize psychological operations and population control. In his famous exposition of guerre revolutionnaire, *Modern Warfare*, French officer Roger Trinquier says, "We know that it is not at all necessary to have the sympathy of a majority of the people in order to rule them. The right organization can turn the trick. . . [popular] support may be spontaneous, although that is quite rare and probably a temporary condition. If it doesn't exist, it must be secured by every possible means, the most effective of which is terrorism."[54] Trinquier was even more blunt at one point in remarks to a French newspaper: "Call me a fascist if you like, but we must make the population docile and manageable; everybody's acts must be controlled."[55]

In Wolf's view,

> Assuming Algerians to be like Frenchmen, possessed of identical culture patterns and interests, the military technicians visualized their task simply as one in which organization reproduces the experimental design of the laboratory and simple conditioning provides the experimental subject with a new set of habits, without the simultaneous creation of a new cultural order for which these new habits could be relevant. . . [W]hat was missing from 'the theory of revolutionary war' was any vision of real revolution, of a transformation of the environment congruent with new patterns of habit. Under the conditions of colonial warfare . . . the theory was emptied of any cultural content to produce simply obedience to naked power imposed from without.[56]

The French Army's view of popular support, then, perhaps further reinforced the Army's tendency to privilege security measures over governance improvement in its use of counterinsurgency tools.

Having said all this, the French counterinsurgency effort did, in fact, include a substantial amount of activity dedicated to improving governance in Algeria. The focal points of these efforts were small teams of soldiers working throughout the countryside known as the Special Administrative Sections (SAS) (as well as their counterparts in larger cities, the Urban Administrative Sections (SAU)). SAS and SAU units worked principally to reform local governments, establish functional medical and educational facilities and other local infrastructure, and to train police.

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[53] Beckett, p. 159.
[54] Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1964), pp. 4, 8 (emphasis in original).
[55] Quoted in D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 156.
[56] Wolf, p. 244.

By 1959, 660 SAS and SAU teams were operating throughout Algeria. By most accounts, the performance of officers on these teams was exceptional, and they scored many successes in winning the loyalty of villagers. In articulating the strategic logic of the SAS/SAU program, one officer posited that "if tomorrow the government gives each inhabitant of my village a new house, either he will not occupy it or he will decide it is his due. On the other hand, if, with a few soldiers, I help a peasant to rebuild a roof, he will be very grateful to me and through me to France which I represent."[57] One striking example of the success of such programs came from the mayor of a town where future counterinsurgency theorist David Galula had led French efforts to improve both security and governance:

> We were told, and we believed, that the French were colonialist oppressors. We have seen with our own eyes what you have done for us here. You never molested us. None of your soldiers ever cast an eye on our women. Far from stealing from us, they shared their food with the poor. Our sick are taken care of, our children are educated, schools and roads are being built. Recently you had the people elect freely their own leaders and we are now planning with you how to improve our life. If this is colonial oppression, then in the name of all the people here I want to thank the French Army for it. Speaking for all of us, I want to tell you that we will help you finish with the criminals who misled us. Just give us the weapons.[58]

If there is such a thing as winning hearts and minds, this is what it must look like, at least at the local level.

Local efforts of the SAS were complemented by the larger counterinsurgency strategies pursued at the national level, most notably the "Constantine Plan" that was implemented under General Challe in 1958-1960. As of 1961, foreign investment was on the rise, industrial production was growing 10 percent per year, unemployment was down, and foreign trade had more than doubled since 1954. The number of children in school was twenty times greater than in 1954, and the number of workers with social security benefits had risen by two-thirds.[59]

For all of the progress achieved through these initiatives, however, broad popular support remained elusive for the French. Two factors offsetting these efforts were described above. First, the frequent incidence of indiscriminate violence and torture by French forces turned off many middle-of-the-road Algerians. Second, the harshness of the resettlement camps convinced many others of France's hostility toward the interests of the Muslim population. Horne concludes, "Of all the confidence and goodwill that may have been gained . . . as much – or more – was lost through . . . intensification of the old 'regroupement' policy."[60]

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[57] Quoted in Melnik, p. 236.
[58] Quoted in David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria (1956-1958)* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1963), p. 232.
[59] Melnik, p. 231.
[60] Horne, p. 338.

But another critical factor that limited the relevance of French efforts to improve governance in Algeria was the lack of connection between those efforts and the larger political context of the war. The real issue at stake in the war was independence, and improvements of governance did little to address this issue. Even Algerians inclined to support continued French rule had to hedge against the possibility that the French government would ultimately withdraw from Algeria. Again, David Galula's experiences speak directly to the key issue here:

> We had every reason to believe that only a minority [of the population] actively supported the rebels. A small amount of co-operation from the majority, and the FLN's fate would have been sealed rapidly. Yet we could not get it except in a few isolated spots. . . Why was the population stubbornly sitting on the fence? Very simply because the Moslems were no fools. They realized perfectly well that the ultimate issue depended on Paris, not on whatever was said and done in Algeria. . . The Algerian Moslems had every incentive to avoid commitment, and who could really blame them? . . . When the Moslems found our pressure too strong, they bowed to it but carefully took out a counter insurance policy with the rebels; the obscure farmer kept paying his dues to the nationalist movement; the more exposed mayor or councilman betrayed us.[61]

Perhaps most important of all, the political system the French were fighting to preserve showed hardly any sign of accommodating the aspirations of Algerian Muslims to play a greater role in their own government. As Horne concludes about France's vision for improving Algeria,

> once one has scraped away the thick gravy layers of propaganda, one finds little serious discussion of social aims of the future Algerian society . . . a profound revolution had taken place in the traditional conservative consciousness of agrarian Algeria, lying deeper than the devoted French SAS administrators could gauge, let alone reverse.[62]

On balance, then, did French counterinsurgents provide good governance to the people of Algeria or not? Economic reforms were extensive and effective, and SAS units contributed greatly to improved standards of living and governance in many parts of the country. But at the same time, population resettlement was highly disruptive and harshly administered and French security measures often terrorized large numbers of innocent people. Good governance was certainly part of the French counterinsurgency strategy. But its implementation was inconsistent enough, and overshadowed enough by evidence of ill will on the part of French forces, that it does not seem fair to conclude unambiguously that the French provided good governance in Algeria.

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[61] Galula, pp. 176-177.
[62] Horne, p. 407.

Was multi-ethnic power sharing pursued?

As implied by the preceding discussion, multi-ethnic power sharing was almost entirely absent from the French strategy in Algeria. Many recognized the explosive potential of Muslim disenfranchisement, but the pieds noirs' sense of entitlement always stymied any serious efforts to address this issue. Democratic reforms were attempted shortly after WWII in order to provide greater voice to the Muslim population in Algeria, but the resulting elections were rigged and had very little effect other than to highlight the system's inequalities.

Another major reform effort was adopted by the French legislature in January 1958, the "loi-cadre," which aimed to introduce a greater degree of federalism and regional autonomy to Algeria's political system. But implementation of the loi cadre fell victim to the political turmoil in France that culminated in the fall of the Fourth Republic in May 1958. As one of its principal proponents, Governor-General Robert Lacoste later concluded, "If [loi-cadre] had gone through, . . . I do believe that all but a small fraction of the pieds noirs . . . could have stayed. . . Maybe the rebellion would have continued, but with less force. Who can say what might have happened, because it was never tried?"[63]

Ultimately, any power sharing arrangement between European and Muslims would have required a much greater degree of compromise between hardliners on each side of the conflict that was almost never in evidence. As Horne puts it, "the basic fact was that, whereas integration, if honourably entered into, might have worked happily in 1936 and less probably in 1945, by 1958 it had become at best a romantic delusion, at worst a confidence trick."[64]

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

In the end, was France's counterinsurgency in Algeria a success or a failure? In spite of a conclusion to the war that appears to be a resounding French defeat, the answer is not straightforward. On purely military grounds, in fact, the French were clearly victorious. The French army scored repeated victories over the FLN, severely restricting its freedom of action both as a guerrilla force in the Algerian countryside, and as terrorist cells in the cities. By 1959, in Galula's estimation, French

> . . . strength was such that the war had been won for all practical purposes . . . I realize this sounds
> odd when one looks at the situation of Algeria today. Yet if experts . . . took the trouble of
> comparing our results in the first six years of the war – from the end of 1954 to the end of 1960 –

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[63] Ibid., p. 270.
[64] Ibid., p. 307.

> with the British achievements in Malaya – a successful counterinsurgency in their judgment and
> mine – during the same lapse of time, they would perhaps see my point.[65]

And, as Galula's comparison to Malaya implies, this military victory was not merely a matter of killing and capturing insurgents – it had a significant effect on popular support for the FLN. Due to its major setbacks in 1957, as Horne points out, "The FLN also lost important ground in the struggle for the souls of the uncommitted 'third force' Muslims, now giving increased indication of war weariness."[66]

Why, then, was the FLN ultimately successful? How did it achieve its main objective of Algerian independence in only eight years in the face of such effective military resistance? It was divisions within the French government that proved decisive. Wolf sums it up this way: "victory came to the [FLN] less through its own brave and desperate struggle during seven and one-half years of war than through the strains which the war had produced in the foundations of the French polity."[67] Part of this strain may be fairly credited to the FLN's persistence, even in the face of consistent political and military setbacks. The ability of the insurgents to maintain a destabilizing influence on Algeria undoubtedly contributed to the French public's exhaustion with the war. But probably more important than this factor was the political conflict created by the hard line pieds noirs in Algeria. It was their machinations that brought down one French government and staged two more attempted coups. And it was the Paris terrorist attacks in 1962 conducted by the pieds noirs extremist group, the "Secret Army Organization" (OAS), that finished off any lingering desire among the French people to maintain their sovereignty over Algeria.   In the referendum of that year on the formal agreements to grant Algerian independence, over 90 percent of French voters voted 'oui."

Hence, it is difficult to define the French counterinsurgency as either a success or a failure. The ultimate ascendance of the insurgents defies the notion of a French success, but the most important causes of that outcome lie very near, if not outside, the hazy boundaries of what can reasonably be considered "counterinsurgency."

Evaluation

The Algerian case presents a difficult challenge for this paper's analytic framework. In essence, the values for two of the framework's five variables remain ambiguous. It seems clear that identity was contested in the Algerian war, and that cross-identity power sharing

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[65] Galula, pp. 243-244.
[66] Horne, p. 219.
[67] Wolf, p. 242.

arrangements were not pursued. It is also clear that French security operations were quite effective in degrading and otherwise suppressing the capabilities of the FLN insurgents. However, summary assessments of French attempts to improve governance in Algeria and of the success of its counterinsurgency efforts in general yield ambiguous results.

At a minimum, we can observe that French counterinsurgency operations enjoyed a great deal of success in pacifying much of Algeria from 1954-1960 in spite of a very mixed record in its efforts to improve governance. It is certainly plausible to place part of the blame for France's eventual defeat on the weaknesses of its governance-related activities. But those weaknesses are not at all the most obvious explanation for that defeat. If French forces had displaced fewer people in their resettlement programs, had administered those resettlement camps more humanely, had conducted SAS operations even more broadly and effectively, and had killed fewer innocent Algerians, would the outcome of the war have been different? It is impossible to know, but given the French government's low threshold for tolerating persistent conflict in Algeria and the intransigence of the pieds noirs leadership toward political compromise, it is difficult to see how better performance in any dimension of the counterinsurgency operations, governance-related or otherwise, would have tipped the scales.

Rather, it appears that a strong sense of "us" and "them," that is, of ethnic identities in conflict, was at the heart of the Algerian war. In the words of Germaine Tillion, a French ethnologist with extensive experience in Algeria before and during the war, the "'hysteria of the two populations constituted an almost total obstacle to any solution,' and nothing could be achieved without first lowering the temperature of hatred and terror."[68] In such an environment, regardless of whether the counterinsurgency is seen as a success or a failure, the contributions that improved governance could make to victory were severely constrained.

South Vietnam, 1962-1973

Overview

Counterinsurgency in American history is frequently viewed through the lens of the United States' involvement in the Second Indochina War (hereafter referred to as the Vietnam War). Given the scale, duration, and traumatic outcome of American involvement in Vietnam, this focus is neither surprising nor inappropriate. Nevertheless, rooms full of books and articles claiming to identify the lessons of Vietnam have yet to yield any consensus about the nature of

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[68]   Quoted and paraphrased by Horne, p. 214.

that war or a generally accepted reckoning of counterinsurgent performance there. With an eye toward this interpretive nettle, the following discussion attempts to draw out what can be learned about this paper's analytic framework and hypotheses from the American experience in Vietnam.

The insurgency facing the government of South Vietnam (GVN) from its creation in 1955 to its conquest in 1975 was a continuation of the Communist, avowedly Maoist revolution that had ended French colonial rule and culminated in the partition of North and South Vietnam. By 1961, Communist insurgents in the south had taken on the identity of a unified National Liberation Front (NLF), comprising a political arm, the People's Revolutionary Party, and a military arm, the Viet Cong (VC). Over time the insurgency would also consist of regular and irregular units of the North Vietnamese Army itself (NVA). VC and NVA forces in South Vietnam were numerous – by one account, insurgent numbers grew from 35,000 in 1961 to roughly 400,000 in 1967.[69] Their goal was the overthrow of the GVN and the unification of South Vietnam under the Communist regime in Hanoi.

America's efforts to oppose the insurgency were marked by gradual escalation from 1950, with the establishment of a four-man Military Assistance Advisory Group to a peak of over half a million committed troops in 1969. The last American combat forces left Vietnam in 1973. The U.S.'s role as a major partner to the South Vietnamese government can be dated to February 1962, when the Military Assistance Command – Vietnam (MACV) was stood up in Saigon. By that point, the insurgency was quickly gaining ground thanks to a combination of strong political and military organization, strong support from North Vietnam, and weak and corrupt leadership at multiple levels of the South Vietnamese government.

In 1965, the GVN's declining fortunes prompted U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson to deploy several divisions of ground forces to Vietnam and to initiate a massive bombing campaign against VC and North Vietnamese targets. U.S. intervention staved off the immediate risk of defeat and was effective in causing a great deal of damage to insurgent forces.[70] But the insurgency remained resilient, a result made plain by the enormous nationwide VC and NVA attack during the Tet holiday of 1968. The Tet Offensive was decisively turned back by South Vietnamese and American forces, but proved to be a signal event for American involvement in demonstrating the tenacity of the insurgency in the face of waning political commitment in the U.S.

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[69] Sarkesian, p. 133.
[70] North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap told a reporter the Communist forces lost over 600,000 people from 1965-1968. Joes, p. 188.

The years following the Tet Offensive saw some improvements in the responsiveness of the GVN and the professionalism of its army, and the VC and NVA struggled to maintain the foothold they had gained in the country. At the same time, however, American policy shifted to emphasize withdrawal, and the GVN was not able to strengthen its position fast enough to resist the combined opposition of the indigenous insurgents and their North Vietnamese allies. South Vietnam fell to its Communist adversaries in 1975.

Was identity contested?

South Vietnam was not an ethnically or religiously homogeneous country. Outside of the majority Vietnamese population, ethnic Chinese, Khmer, and Montagnard minorities made up 10-15% of the population.[71] More politically salient were distinctions between the majority Buddhists and Catholics, who made up about 10% of the population.[72] Partly due to its ties to South Vietnam's Catholic first president, Ngo Dinh Diem, the Catholic community exerted political influence beyond its size. This dynamic created tension between Catholic and Buddhist communities. As Robert Thompson describes, discrimination against Buddhists "stemmed partly from the fact that the Catholics generally were better educated and therefore able to take greater material advantage of their opportunities, and partly from the fact that the Catholics were more committed as a whole to the war against the Viet Cong."[73]

However, in spite of some highly-charged religious conflicts during Diem's rule, the religious divisions in South Vietnamese society were relatively mild and did not usually define political allegiances. Douglas Blaufarb argues that "The religion of the majority, Hinayana Buddhism, was never a strongly organized church. Certain religious sects . . . showed persistent vitality but involved only small minorities. Only two nationwide institutions persisted with approximately their former vitality: the family and the village."[74]

Most important, although some relationships can be drawn between ethnic and religious divisions and some political leanings during the war,[75] those divisions were not the basis of the insurgents' grievances, and ethnic and religious identities were not the bases that either side

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[71] Richard A. Hunt, *Pacification: The American Struggle for Vietnam's Hearts and Minds* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 10.
[72] Joes, p. 37.
[73] Thompson, p. 65.
[74] Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance 1950 to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 91.
[75] Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam," *Politics and Society*, vol. 35, no. 2, June 2007, pp. 188-204.

usually claimed for the legitimacy of its cause. Insurgents and counterinsurgents in Vietnam were far more similar than they were different.

Instead, grievances arose principally from the socio-economic disruption in traditional peasant communities introduced by the newly independent GVN. Following the split between North and South Vietnam, the tension between the educated, urban elite and the peasantry was further exacerbated when President Diem abolished political autonomy at the village level. Blaufarb contends that "The result was to bring into direct contact the two cultures of modern, educated elite and traditional peasant life which had grown worlds apart, and to charge the elite with managing a new type of society for which the peasants were entirely unprepared, one which provided services but also placed new and stricter demands on the villages."[76]

More will be said about the nature of insurgent grievances in the governance section below. But for the purposes of assessing the role of identities in shaping the Vietnam War, Sam Sarkesian's assessment is directly on point:

> An important characteristic of the revolution was the fact that the two major protagonists . . . were of the same ethnic group but represented different political systems. . . The lack of clear delineation between the protagonists and supporters focused attention on the effectiveness of one or the other system. This effectiveness was judged on the measure of security and the social and economic benefits they could afford the peasants.[77]

In this sense, identity was not contested in Vietnam.

Were good security operations conducted?

Deterioration in security of the South Vietnamese population in the early 1960s was severe, and to a significant extent was the main impetus for the earliest escalations in American involvement. By one estimate, 80 percent of the countryside in 1961 was controlled by the VC. The visiting Arthur Schlesinger lamented that "The guerrillas now control almost all of the southern delta – so much so that I could find no American who would drive me outside Saigon in his car even by day without a military convoy."[78]

Early campaigns against the VC by South Vietnam's Army (Army of the Republic of Vietnam, or ARVN) were largely ineffective, and even counterproductive because of the ARVN's lack of professionalism and frequently indiscriminate use of firepower.[79] Under the

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[76] Ibid., p. 92.
[77] Sarkesian, p. 91.
[78] Ibid., p. 89.
[79] See Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1988), Books I and III.

tutelage of their American advisors, ARVN commanders focused on large-scale operations with battalion and brigade sized units, and VC strength continued to grow. A British observer and veteran of the Malayan Emergency saw three causes for the failure to improve population security:

> Ineffective registration and control of the population have allowed Viet Cong commanders and units to keep in touch freely through public channels; commanders have been reluctant to send small numbers of soldiers against large guerrilla units; and massive airmobile operations against big Viet Cong units have left few men available for harassment patrols.[80]

In 1962, GVN launched the strategic hamlets program, an attempt, partly modeled on the New Villages of the Malayan Emergency, to greatly enhance security in the villages throughout the countryside through a combination of physical measures, increased investment in local security forces and improved communications networks linking the hamlets. Intended to be the centerpiece of the counterinsurgency, the strategic hamlet program was beset from the beginning by problems of both design and execution. For example, as in Algeria, large-scale population resettlement proved to be extremely unpopular with peasants who had multi-generation ties to the land where they lived and worked.

Additionally, the program's security measures were often poorly resourced and implemented. Richard Clutterbuck summarizes the program's meager results: "With little to stop them but a perimeter fence patrolled by part-time armed villagers and with their own agents already inside, the Viet Cong were able to overrun large numbers of these hamlets; and this had a disastrous effect on public confidence."[81] Douglas Blaufarb continues:

> What happened in hamlet after hamlet was that the population was hastily organized to construct defenses and man them, and promises of reimbursement were made for support of all the varied types required, but all too often these promises went unfulfilled, sometimes because of outright embezzlement, more often for reasons of disorganization.[82]

The GVN abandoned the strategic hamlet program in early 1964. It was succeeded by a series of new programs, none of which made a great deal of progress in securing villages against VC incursions.

The introduction of American ground forces in 1965 was a major milestone in South Vietnam's struggle to provide security. But the Americans' impact on security was decidedly mixed. U.S. forces were crucial in rolling back and preventing major movements of VC and NVA conventional forces that were threatening to take control of major parts of the country. But

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[80] Clutterbuck, p. 73.
[81] Ibid., p. 68.
[82] Blaufarb, p. 192.

American combat operations were governed by a strategy dedicated to the attrition of Communist forces through "search and destroy" missions. They did not focus on securing populated areas. The MACV commander from 1964-1968, General William Westmoreland, saw the war in primarily conventional terms, and therefore did not see great value in focusing military resources on population security. His attitude is nicely summarized by the one-word answer he once gave to a reporter's question about the key to defeating the insurgency: "Firepower."[83] This emphasis on large-scale operations and the heavy use of artillery and aerial bombardment also resulted in a large number of casualties among non-combatants,[84] displacing over a million people from their homes[85] and further degrading security among the people where the insurgency was being fought.

Many Americans recognized the problems with this strategy from the beginning, however.[86] Over time, policy slowly shifted to accommodate greater emphasis on providing security. The Marine Corps's Combined Action Platoon (CAP) program was an early example of this recognition. CAPs were small teams, composed of twelve Marines and 24 Popular Force (PF) militia men, who lived and worked in villages for months at a time. Though the CAP program enjoyed some success, it was never implemented on a large scale, staying confined to the Marines and their area of operations.

It was not until 1967 that "pacification" was given significant focus and resources by American leadership in Washington and Saigon through the creation of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary (later Rural) Development Support (CORDS) program. The pacification campaign that CORDS was to lead aimed to improve both security and governance in South Vietnam, but it was predicated on the primacy of security. As historian Richard Hunt describes, "After a modicum of security was established, . . . the Americans believed, the process of development could begin – electing local officials, stimulating rural economic growth, and opening roads."[87] The so-called "accelerated pacification campaign" that began in late 1968 featured ambitious goals, aiming to secure over a thousand contested hamlets.[88] And it entailed major changes in resource allocations to match those ambitious goals.

> According to data compiled by Pentagon analysts, only 0.5 percent of American military
> operations and 5 percent of U.S. expenditures in South Vietnam supported pacification before the

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[83] Quoted in Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 197.

[84] For example, see Sheehan, pp. 617-621.

[85] Beckett, p. 197.

[86] See Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy At War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 134-140.

[87] Hunt, p. 172.

[88] Ibid.

accelerated campaign. During the campaign, it was estimated that half of all American ground operations supported pacification, for the first time focusing the U.S. Army's efforts on the struggle for control of the people.[89]

One key focus of the pacification campaign was to bolster the Regional Forces and Popular Forces (RF/PF), local militias whose mission was to operate in their home provinces and districts to provide local security.[90] The RF/PF grew by 73 percent from 1966 to 1972.[91] Closely related to this effort was a large expansion in the military advisory program. CORDS more than doubled the number of advisors to local security forces from 1967 to 1968 alone.[92] A third prominent program in the pacification program was a concerted effort to attack the VC "infrastructure," by improving intelligence on, and attempting to neutralize, VC administrative, political, and propaganda capabilities. This "Phoenix Program" suffered from abuses, bad intelligence, and public controversy. But it also scored some significant successes against the VC infrastructure, an impact since acknowledged by North Vietnamese officials.[93]

The pacification campaign initiated in 1968 was certainly not an unambiguous success, but it did yield remarkable gains. By the end of 1969, the percentage of the South Vietnamese population that the U.S. and GVN considered to be "relatively secure" rose above 93 percent. The population living in areas considered to be controlled by the insurgents fell below three percent.[94] In Hunt's judgment, "When viewed in the longer perspective, the [accelerated pacification campaign] marked the start of a period, roughly 1969 to early 1972, of uninterrupted gains in population security throughout South Vietnam and further erosion of the Viet Cong."[95] This phase of the war presents a marked contrast with the years immediately preceding it, where population security was largely neglected, or worse.

Was good governance provided?

Counterinsurgent efforts to improve governance in Vietnam followed a similar path as those to improve security of the population. Programs such as the strategic hamlets, CAPs, and CORDS generally married a variety of socio-economic initiatives to the improvements in security that were their focus. Some senior U.S. officials believed that such initiatives were the key to victory in Vietnam. For example, Assistant Secretary of State Roger Hilsman issued a

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[89] Ibid., p. 192.
[90] Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999), p. 72.
[91] Komer (1986), p. 120.
[92] Hunt, pp. 107-108.
[93] Sorley, p. 147, and Beckett, p. 197.
[94] Hunt, p. 254.
[95] Ibid., p. 204.

paper in February 1962 titled "A Strategic Concept for South Vietnam," which called for an emphasis on political, economic, and social measures to defeat the insurgency.[96]

But in the first several years of the war, attempts to implement such measures were generally weak and ineffectual. The Diem regime was highly corrupt and did little to address popular grievances. In fact, reform programs the GVN did pursue tended to reinforce peasant grievances rather than alleviate them. In D. Michael Shafer's estimation, the "VC addressed peasants' problems directly: landlessness, high rents, indebtedness, and high taxes," while the GVN's efforts to tackle these issues were really aimed at "solidification of support among landlords."[97] Such policies served as confirmation of the VC's philosophy and message about the class-based repression practiced by the GVN. Jeffrey Race, who conducted extensive interviews with peasants and participants on both sides of the conflict in Long An province, concluded that "the incentives for living in the strategic hamlets were not relevant to the reasons for assistance to the revolutionary movement . . . the program devoted its resources to a physical reinforcement of the existing social system and of those who held power under it . . ."[98]

Partly as a result of these dynamics, many South Vietnamese people really did prefer the political leadership of the insurgents to that of the government. The insurgents understood the people's needs better than the government, or at least were more willing to address them. Race argues that "a basic fallacy underlay the government's development programs in Long An: that people 'supported communism' because they were poor, and therefore that reducing their poverty would reduce the appeal of revolution. Thus this approach viewed the problem as incremental rather than distributive."[99] Perhaps the most important illustration of this phenomenon was the different attitudes toward land reform that prevailed on each side of the conflict during the early years. In his interviews, Race found that "government officials uniformly dismissed the significance of land ownership as an issue in the conflict, while former members of the revolutionary movement uniformly emphasized its importance."[100] The VC, in fact, carried out land reform during the early 1960s in areas where they had established sufficient control.[101]

Thus the insurgents had the upper hand in the battle for the sympathies of the peasant population. The Americans' tendency toward liberal use of firepower and loose rules of

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[96] See Beckett, p. 199 and Blaufarb, p. 109.
[97] Shafer, pp. 264-265.
[98] Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), p. 192.
[99] Ibid., p. 201.
[100] Ibid., p. xiv.
[101] Blaufarb, p. 96.

engagement did little to mitigate this VC advantage. In addition to causing the extensive collateral damage noted above, the attrition-based strategy diverted money, manpower, and management focus away from the socio-economic competition underway between the VC and the GVN. In the first several years of the U.S. intervention, this was not simply a matter of neglect, but rather of deliberate strategy. One U.S. general described the problem this way:

> I had two rules. One is that you would try to get a very close meshing of pacification . . . and military operations. The other rule is the military operations would be given first priority in every case. That doesn't mean you wouldn't do pacification, but this gets at what you might call winning the hearts and minds of the people. I'm all for that. It's a nice concept, but in fighting the Viet Cong and the NVA, if you don't break their military machine you might as well forget winning the hearts and minds of the people.[102]

However, as described in the section above on security, these priorities in the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy underwent a transformation beginning around 1967-1968. Three key factors help account for the Americans' subsequent focus on governance as a key instrument of counterinsurgency. First, U.S. leaders in Washington, including President Johnson, had become convinced by events and expert advice that a greater focus on the people was warranted. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara summarized his view of the problem in 1966:

> By and large, the people in rural areas believe that the GVN when it comes will not stay but that the VC will; that cooperation with the GVN will be punished by the VC; that the GVN is really indifferent to the people's welfare; that the low-level GVN are tools of the local rich; and that the GVN is ridden with corruption. Success in pacification depends on the interrelated functions of providing physical security, destroying the VC apparatus, motivating the people to cooperate, and establishing responsive local government.[103]

This growing appreciation in Washington for the importance of improving governance in Vietnam led to the second key development in the changing strategy: the creation of CORDS. According to CORDS's founder Robert Komer, prior to CORDS, ". . . counterinsurgency (or pacification) fell between stools. It was everybody's business and nobody's. The absence of a single major agency or directing machinery charged with it contributed greatly to the prolonged failure to press it on a large scale."[104] CORDS established that agency and "directing machinery" and facilitated the allocation of greater resources to the pacification campaign.

The third key factor was the replacement in 1968 of General Westmoreland with General Creighton Abrams as MACV commander. Abrams recognized many of the problems with the attrition strategy and the conventional military orientation that had prevailed under Westmoreland, and he put the full weight of his command behind the new pacification campaign.

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[102] Major (later Lieutenant) General Julian Ewell, quoted in Krepinevich, p. 222.
[103] Quoted in Blaufarb, p. 236.
[104] Komer (1986), p. 83.

The extent to which Abrams deserves credit for departing from previous practice remains a matter of scholarly debate. But at a minimum, General William Rosson, who took over as Abrams's deputy in 1969 after a year's absence from Vietnam, remarked that "Abrams (with [Ambassador Ellsworth] Bunker) had made [the strategy] 'clear and hold' instead of 'search and destroy.'"[105]

In addition to building up and advising local security forces, a central focus of the pacification campaign was supporting the so-called "revolutionary development" (RD) cadres throughout South Vietnam. The RD cadres were charged with a wide variety of tasks, including to

> restore local elected government, assist in community self-help or government-subsidized development projects (such as repairing roads, buildings, and bridges), provide medical treatment to the ill, and aid farmers in getting credit. Teams would also issue identification cards to citizens, recruit people for the armed forces, organize and train self-defense groups, uncover and arrest members of the Viet Cong, and conduct political rallies.[106]

In order to support these activities, CORDS created and managed a similarly diverse array of U.S. programs, such as public administration, economic stabilization, education, public health, census taking, civil engineering, and construction.[107]

Perhaps the most important single element of the counterinsurgency directed at improving governance was one undertaken entirely by the GVN, itself: land reform. As noted above, land ownership and landlord-tenant relationships were highly salient issues for Vietnamese peasants and were often their chief grievances against the government. A 1966 study that surveyed South Vietnamese farmers about their needs and concerns reported that "It had been presumed that villagers would stress . . . public works including schools. Instead, the desire to own land was at the top of the list. . . [E]ven peace and security were far down the list behind the desire to own land."[108]

Hunt explains why this was such a potent issue for the Vietnamese peasants. During the reign of the French,

> wealthy urban entrepreneurs had slowly bought up tracts of farmland traditionally belonging to established villages and hamlets and had allowed farmers to till the land in exchange for the payment of a fixed percentage of the crop in rent. The result was that large numbers of Vietnamese . . . were either landless or tenants. . . Often officials and solders returning to villages liberated from the Viet Cong were accompanied by landlords, who reclaimed their property and

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[105] Quoted in Sorley, p. 29.
[106] Hunt, p. 37.
[107] See ibid., pp. 93-95.
[108] Shafer, p. 266.

collected back rents. In some cases government officials themselves were landlords. Such practices led many peasants to identify the Saigon regime with exploitation . . .[109]

In March 1970, the GVN finally enacted comprehensive land reform in the form of legislation known as "Land to the Tiller." The new law granted ownership of land to all current tenant cultivators and compensated the existing owners for the expropriation. Notably, the land grant was made without discrimination with regard to who had supported the government in the past.[110] Even those tenant farmers with historical VC sympathies were granted their land. While the Land to the Tiller legislation was not as revolutionary as it would have been ten years earlier, it still had a significant positive effect on the popularity of the government. In 1972, a study funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development surveyed peasants and conditions in the South Vietnamese countryside. It concluded that "The Land to the Tiller Program is a splendid means to pacification. . . It is helping turn a once-disaffected, politically neutral mass of potential and sometimes actual revolutionaries . . . into middle class farmers in support of the regime."[111]

In conjunction with the other reforms under way and the improving security in the villages, economic activity and prosperity improved significantly in the early 1970s. Roads and canals re-opened, investment increased, and agricultural production boomed. Annual rice production, for example, increased nearly 40 percent from 1968 to 1972.[112]

In the end, then, did the U.S. and its Vietnamese allies provide good governance to the people of South Vietnam? In the first years of the war, it is clear that on balance they did not. Corruption, incompetence, the use of excessive force, and neglect of peasant interests were rife and overwhelmed efforts to provide good government. The judgment is much less clear in the war's later years, around 1968 and after. None of the earlier problems disappeared altogether, but in those years, security and good governance were central components of the U.S. and GVN counterinsurgency strategies, and their implementation was somewhat successful.

Was multi-ethnic power sharing pursued?

Because the war in Vietnam did not center on conflict between ethnic or religious groups, no multi-ethnic power sharing arrangements were pursued, or were likely to be very relevant if they had been.

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[109] Hunt, pp. 11, 14-15.
[110] Race, pp. 272-273.
[111] Hunt, p. 264.
[112] See Blaufarb, p. 266 and Sorley, p. 149.

Was the counterinsurgency successful?

As in Algeria, an evaluation of the outcome of counterinsurgency in Vietnam is more complicated than conventional wisdom would suggest. The departure of American forces from Vietnam under the cloud of domestic political disillusionment and the ultimate collapse of South Vietnam to the Communists in the North belie an assessment of success in the counterinsurgency. And yet by many measures, the counterinsurgency conducted by the U.S. and the GVN did succeed in marginalizing its VC enemies.

For analytic purposes, it is useful to separate the U.S. involvement in Vietnam into two halves, roughly divided between the periods before and after the 1968 Tet Offensive. Though Tet is remembered perhaps most of all as the beginning of the end of American involvement, it also represented an enormous blow to the VC and their insurgent strategy, one from which it never fully recovered. In his study of the role of legitimacy in insurgencies, Timothy Lomperis considers the Vietnam War as two separate "half cases," arguing that "after Tet, the political issues fueling the insurgency were abandoned in favor of a purely military solution. Hence legitimacy as an explanatory variable works only until Tet . . ."[113]

There is little doubt that counterinsurgency up to the point of Tet was a failure. The sheer size and level of activity of the VC that allowed them to mount the offensive gives some testimony to the failure of their opponents. But also, at the political level, Jeffrey Race's detailed study of the Long An province makes clear that the VC was ascendant, if not in control there. He claims that as of 1968, the insurgency "had all but extinguished the government presence in the province and that it had the ability, based on internal forces, to smash the remaining government units at will."[114]

But this condition did not last. The year 1968 marked, in addition to the Tet Offensive, the earliest effects of a new emphasis on pacification from Washington and Saigon, a change in the strategic perspective at the top of the American command, and the beginnings of serious efforts at political reform from the GVN. In the years following, VC influenced waned, and the counterinsurgents made steady gains in securing the South Vietnamese population.

The famed American advisor, John Paul Vann, who spent most of 1962-1964 and 1966-1972 in Vietnam in various roles both military and civilian and from the level of a lieutenant colonel to a two-star general equivalent, wrote in a letter home in December 1969, "For the first time in my involvement here, I am not interested in visiting either Washington or Paris, because

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[113] Lomperis, p. 287.
[114] Race, p. 264.

all of my previous visits have been with the intention of attempting to influence or change the policies for Vietnam. Now I am satisfied with the policies."[115]

Robert Komer, the founder and first director of CORDS wrote years later that "in no important field did GVN performance improve so much as in pacification. . . Indeed, it is on the role which the 1968-1971 pacification program played in the turnaround of the war during 1968-1971 that the case for a counterinsurgency-oriented strategy must chiefly rest." In support of this argument, he cites both inputs and outputs of the pacification campaign:

> GVN/U.S. resources devoted to pacification rose from under $600 million in CY1966 to around $1.5 billion at the CY1970 peak. . . in March 1968, only 59 percent of the population . . . was regarded as even 'relatively secure.' By end-1971, this had risen to over 96 percent . . . by [1975] the indigenous Viet Cong insurgency had largely petered out. Pacification had not failed; indeed, it had become a qualified success at long last.[116]

Komer's successor at CORDS, William Colby, also believed that the pacification program had been a qualified success, citing the steep decline of insurgent attacks and the shift in strategy toward conventional warfare conducted by the NVA.[117]

It is, of course, reasonable to discount the perspectives and conclusions of participants in the counterinsurgency who may have an interest in interpreting the outcomes of those efforts as successful. But these perspectives can also be found in more scholarly treatments of this period from sources with direct experience in the events, and from critics of the general policy pursued by the U.S. in Vietnam. In an interview that Race conducted with a former Communist Party member in 1970, he heard the following assessment of local developments:

> . . . a number of changes in the government approach . . . had begun to make themselves felt around May of 1969. One of these changes had been a partial reconstitution of the government's village apparatus. A second had been the psychological impact of the government's land-reform proposals, widely propagandized at the time. A third important change had been the considerable expansion of the Popular Force and People's Self-Defense Force organizations. The combined effect of these changes was to make it much more difficult for revolutionary operatives to penetrate populated areas to gather food, intelligence, and recruits.[118]

Blaufarb, another critic of the U.S.'s Vietnam policy, describes the developments in the years following Tet this way:

> The evidence is impressive that a completely changed situation prevailed in the rural areas and that the insurgency in the countryside – the people's war – was effectively contained. This was certainly the impression of observers on the scene based on indicators evident to all. . . Moreover,

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[115] Sorley, pp. 169-170.
[116] Komer (1986), pp. 151, 154 (emphasis in original).
[117] See Hunt, p. 257 and Sorley, p. 305.
[118] Race, p. 270.

similar evidence confirms that these gains were firmly established and that the situation did not
significantly change until shortly before the sudden collapse of 1975.[119]

Even Robert Thompson, advisor to both Presidents Diem and Nixon, and long a critic of U.S. Vietnam policy concluded flatly: "The VC side of it is over. The people have rejected the VC."[120]

Perhaps even more revealing is the view of trends in counterinsurgency from the North Vietnamese Communists, themselves. Hunt reports that at the beginning of 1971, "the Politburo . . . viewing with alarm the progress of pacification and Vietnamization and the declining military fortunes of communist forces, the leadership in Hanoi decided on a massive offensive to win the war militarily."[121] The manner of the war's continuation and its ultimate resolution clearly reflected this judgment and generally took on the character of a conventional interstate war between North and South Vietnam.

Evaluation

Considering the American involvement in the Vietnam War from 1962-1973 as two separate cases presents an interesting contrast in the variables of this paper's analytic framework. First, ethnic identities, and therefore any related power sharing arrangements, were not very salient issues in Vietnam. Second, prior to 1968, it seems clear that security operations were generally poor and efforts to improve governance were neglected, poorly executed, or both. And the counterinsurgency was fairly clearly unsuccessful. After 1968, the security and governance-related operations both improved significantly, and the fortunes of the counterinsurgency clearly followed. To claim outright, as some do, that the counterinsurgency was a success may take this analysis a step too far. But such a categorical judgment is not necessary to recognize the clear correlation between positive trends in the independent variables of security and governance and positive trends in the dependent variable of counterinsurgent success.

At one level, this is simply a vindication of the conventional wisdom that security and governance are the keys to successful counterinsurgency strategy. But it also highlights one of the central challenges of this analysis – to tease apart the relative contributions of security and governance. Here we must return to the basic model outlined in Chapter 2, depicting the linkages operating between inputs of good governance and outputs related to sustainable peace. There it was asserted that understanding the dynamics of cause and effect depends on an

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[119] Blaufarb, p. 270.
[120] Sorley, p. 317.
[121] Hunt, p. 255.

appreciation for local dynamics. Jeffrey Race's study of the Long An province took just this approach. One key point from his study was that the VC absolutely conceived of the war as a competition of government between themselves and the South Vietnamese officials, not only a competition of control.

> By developing policies more congenial to the interests of these classes than were the policies of the government, the Party ensured that when the conflict crossed into the military phase the majority of the population would choose to fight against the government in defense of its own interests . . . The Party's demonstrated organizational superiority in Long An came about through the development of social policies leading to superior motivation.[122]

The GVN, by contrast, conceived of the insurgency more in terms of criminal behavior in its earliest days, and therefore did not develop a strong governance program to compete with the VC.

And it appears that it was precisely this dynamic that was reversed in many places in South Vietnam during the years after the Tet Offensive. Samuel Popkin was another scholar who conducted extensive interviews among the South Vietnamese peasants during the war. After a series of interviews in 1969, he concluded that "The increase in GVN control results in large measure from a drastic decline in the appeal to peasants of life in areas controlled by the Viet Cong, and from the grave danger of fighting for them."[123]

So, while separating the causal effects of security and governance remains difficult, the dynamics of these variables as observed in Vietnam provide some evidence that improvements in governance can yield large benefits in security, not just the other way around.

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[122] Race, pp. 150, 165.
[123] Quoted in Blaufarb, p. 271.

IV. Summary Analysis and Discussion

The summary analysis of the case studies in Chapter 3 will proceed in two parts, corresponding to the two purposes for the cases outlined at the beginning of that chapter: first, to assess the paper's hypotheses using the cases presented here; second, to consider what refinements and augmentations to the analytic framework that these cases might suggest.

Applying the Framework to the Cases

Table 3 below summarizes the codings applied in the preceding case studies for each of the framework's key variables. As indicated in Chapter 2, binary codings of these factors are crude and meant to be useful as points of analytic departure rather than as conclusions.

Table 3: Case Study Variable Summary for Malaya, Algeria, South Vietnam

	Independent Variables				Dependent Variable
Cases	**a (governance)**	**b (security)**	**c (identity)**	**d (pwr shrng)**	**y (success)**
Malaya	Yes	Yes	Ambiguous	Yes	Yes
Algeria	Ambiguous	Yes	Yes	No	Ambiguous
South Vietnam (1962-1968)	No	No	No	No	No
South Vietnam (1968-1973)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ambiguous

Given these values, what do the cases say about the initial hypotheses advanced in Chapter 2?

H1: Good governance is not necessary for counterinsurgent success. Would be confirmed by: a=No, y=Yes.

None of the cases here strongly supports this hypothesis. The Algerian case, however, does provide some provocative evidence in this direction. As indicated, the quality of French attempts to improve Algerian governance and the campaign's overall success are difficult to classify. But the French achieved a great deal of success in defeating the FLN's challenge to its rule in spite of a checkered record of governance. Perhaps the key counterfactual question is

what would have happened if French governance improvements had been no better (or even worse), but if the pieds noirs had pursued more extensive efforts to expand Muslim Algerian political participation and autonomy? If such compromises short of granting independence had been negotiated, it is possible that the counterinsurgency would be generally remembered as a success, even in spite of its brutality, the harshness of its regroupement camps, and its mixed record of improving standards of living.

> *H2: If identity is not contested, then good governance and good security are sufficient for counterinsurgent success. Would be confirmed by: a=Yes, b=Yes, c=No, y=Yes.*

Both the Malayan and post-Tet Vietnam cases provide some qualified evidence in support of this hypothesis. For the Malayan case to support the hypothesis, we must accept that identity was essentially not contested in that conflict. Such a judgment is certainly defensible on the grounds that the ethnic dimension of the Malayan Communists' insurgency was a default condition, not a primary source of grievance. The MCP neither wanted its movement to be ethnically-based nor exploited its ethnic dimensions beyond a tactical level. Given this judgment, the Malayan case fits the pattern suggested by hypothesis H2.

Still, the key counterfactual question in applying the Malayan case to this hypothesis is what would have happened if the UMNO-MCA alliance had failed or never come about? In order for the Malayan case to confirm hypothesis H2, the successful multi-ethnic power sharing alliance must be judged as unnecessary to the counterinsurgent success. Such a judgment is plausible, but certainly not a forgone conclusion.

Hypothesis H2 is also supported by the record of counterinsurgency in the later years of the Vietnam War, when U.S. and GVN focus on security and governance in the South Vietnamese countryside made great strides in marginalizing Viet Cong influence and capability. The great qualification for this case, of course, is that the GVN ultimately lost its war against Communism, making whatever "counterinsurgent success" it can claim somewhat Pyrrhic.

In a sense, hypothesis H2 is just a statement of the conventional wisdom of traditional counterinsurgency strategy – that the key to victory is to focus on providing security and a better life for the civilian population. So in this sense, we should not be surprised to see some confirmatory evidence about this from some of the major counterinsurgencies of the past century. Indeed, these cases were important sources of the conventional wisdom in the first place. But what is most striking about this evidence is not its clear alignment with the traditional

hypothesis about counterinsurgency, but rather its tentativeness and ambiguity. If these cases do not clearly replicate the logic of conventional wisdom, which cases will?

Two broad explanations might account for this ambiguity. First, it might come from limitations of the analysis, itself. Second, the phenomena under examination might actually be much harder to generalize about than we are conditioned to assume by mainstream policy literature and discourse.

Certainly, the analysis has its limitations. The brevity and small number of cases considered here are among them. The simplicity of the analytic framework is another. But, as outlined in Chapter 2, simplicity has offsetting benefits such as tractability and applicability. And in any case, this framework's simplifications match those that frequently serve as decision variables in strategic decision making.

The second explanation for the ambiguity is also important. One lesson of these case studies is that easy generalizations about cause and effect in counterinsurgencies should be treated as suspect. With regard to these cases, conventional wisdom asserts that 1) improving the quality of governance was vital to Britain's victory over communist insurgents in Malaya; 2) France was defeated by Algerian insurgents because it surrendered its perceived legitimacy through the practice of torture; and 3) the United States lost its war against communist insurgents in South Vietnam because it fundamentally misunderstood the type of war it was fighting. The facts of these cases suggest that such conclusions are only partial truths, and, as such, can be quite misleading.

But beyond the hazards of conventional wisdom, what about the paper's hypothesized role of identity politics in subverting the contributions that traditional tools of counterinsurgency do make?

> *H3: If identity is contested, then good governance and good security together are*
> *not sufficient for counterinsurgent success. Would be confirmed by: a=Yes,*
> *b=Yes, c=Yes, y=No.*

And the more general hypothesis stated at the beginning of Chapter 2 is also relevant here:

> *Operations conducted to provide good governance will contribute less to victory*
> *in counterinsurgency when identities are contested than when identities are*
> *uncontested.*

Unfortunately, the Malayan, Algerian, and Vietnamese cases do little to resolve these questions. Of the two cases where identity politics mattered at all, in only one did it constitute a

defining motivation for the insurgency – Algeria. In that case, it is fair to conclude that identity politics did subvert the effectiveness of the traditional tools of counterinsurgency. In particular, the insurgency drew much of its appeal and its claims to legitimacy from its support for independence from French rule, an issue which created a stark fault line between large numbers of Algeria's Muslim Arabs and Berbers on one side and its largely Christian Europeans on the other. Population security and improved governance by the existing regime did not directly address these concerns.

The trouble is, however, French methods of prosecuting the war through providing security and improving governance often subverted their own effectiveness. Consequently, it is impossible to be sure how much of the ultimate French failure was an irreducible product of intractable ethnic conflict and how much could have been avoided by better application of the principles of providing good governance. Still, as was suggested earlier, the balance of evidence suggests that even much better French performance in this regard would have been unlikely to be decisive. If this is true, then the Algerian case could be seen as providing some evidence to support this general hypothesis. But more evidence and analysis is clearly required.

Applying the Cases to the Framework

What analytical lessons can be drawn from these case studies to help in refining or augmenting the proposed framework?

One very simple yet important point is that the cases support the framework's treatment of security and governance as complexly interacting but separable factors. Each case offers evidence that the factors are mutually reinforcing and that details of their interaction at local levels can help in explaining those dynamics. A second and directly related point is to emphasize the limitations of observing and analyzing such phenomena at the national level. These limitations validate an analytic approach that adopts a local focus to the extent possible.

From a substantive perspective one important insight for the subsequent analysis concerns treatment of the "contested identity" variable, and is raised by the Malayan case. That case makes clear that the depth and political viability of ethnic conflict, together with prospects for harmonization or compromise thereof, may not be obvious at the outset of a conflict. Ethnic conflict did not turn out to define the Malayan conflict. But perhaps this was not the only possible path the war could have taken. For example one can read the strong performance of the UMNO-MCA alliance as evidence that ethnic divisions were never a crucial element of the conflict, that they were surmountable from the beginning. But was this predictable, much less

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inevitable? As Donald Horowitz describes, there was a considerable amount of chance involved in the circumstances that led to the alliance's success.[1] On the other hand, the British were committed from the outset to a multi-ethnic nation. So perhaps the prospects for defusing ethnic conflict were predictable, since in some sense, the British did predict at least the feasibility of that outcome. Did the British understand the ethnic dynamics correctly, did their strategy change the dynamics for the better, or were they just lucky? Put another way, was the success of the UMNO-MCA alliance a cause of the counterinsurgent success, or was it the result of underlying conditions that would have allowed for counterinsurgent success independent of the alliance?

Interestingly, the same questions are relevant to Iraq. Like the British in Malaya, the Americans in Iraq were committed from the outset to a multi-ethnic nation. But unlike the British, they have not realized that goal. Did they understand the dynamics incorrectly, did their strategy change the dynamics for the worse, or were they just unlucky?

Quite possibly, the answers to these questions all flow directly from the answer to this question: how severe was the ethnic division at the beginning of the conflict? The argument was made in Chapter 1 that, though group loyalties are not fixed, they are likely to be very difficult to influence over the relatively short timeframes faced by counterinsurgents. If this is true, then the severity of ethnic cleavages at the beginning of the conflict is likely to be highly influential in shaping outcomes. Accordingly, gauging that severity would be a first-order priority for strategy development. The need to be particularly sensitive to this question is one lesson learned for the rest of the empirical work.

Counterinsurgency experiences in Malaya, Algeria, and Vietnam also suggest the possible utility of an additional framework for addressing the issues of this paper, one that treats the role of ethnic identity implicitly rather than explicitly. A theme that recurs in the scholarship about Vietnam in particular is that peasant grievances there were not so much driven by their level of poverty or their absolute standard of living as by the distribution of wealth and power in their communities. Clearly, this distinction is critical to any counterinsurgency strategy designed to address popular grievances. Race explains this logic as it operated in Long An province in the early and mid-1960s:

> Economic development would go on regardless of who won, although it might be delayed while deciding who would win. Thus it was simply not an issue in the struggle. . . Government programs were focused largely on providing a general *increment* of wealth or income, whereas what attracted people to the revolutionary movement was that it represented a new society in which there would be an individual *redistribution* of values, including power and status as well as material possessions. . . Those unsympathetic to the government were glad to have dispensaries, roads, loans and farmers' associations, but they went right ahead and cooperated with the revolutionary

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[1]   Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 402.

movement, for *the same groups were still going to be at the bottom no matter how much assistance the government provided.*[2]

Race argues that one of the reasons the VC were so effective in the first half of the war was that they recognized this redistributive imperative. Of course redistribution of wealth would come naturally to Communist insurgents, central as it is to their political philosophy. But Race points out another important distinction in this regard – that participants in the insurgency, themselves, distinguished between "policies redistributive of wealth and income" and "policies redistributive of power and status."[3] Or, to put it another way, grievances about distribution had both economic and political dimensions, and they were separable.

Blaufarb makes a similar point in his analysis of Vietnam, arguing that

> the critical aspect of rural development aid for counterinsurgency purposes was the process by which decisions were made and the aid distributed. . . Grievance processes are [more important] than the more common emphases on education, health services, roads, and the like, although the latter should not be ignored. In all these matters, the process . . . is more important than the material details. It must be a process in which the beneficiaries are confirmed in their essential goal of achieving greater control over what is done for them and to them by the power structure.[4]

The decision "processes" to which Blaufarb refers must by definition reflect the distribution of "power and status" that Race's interview respondents found to be more important than the distribution of material goods and services.

In Blaufarb's view, it was limitations in the reform of distribution of political power where the South Vietnamese counterinsurgency ultimately fell short. Importantly, he separates this phenomenon from the distributive problems of wealth, which were quite extensively addressed by the U.S.-GVN pacification campaign and the Land to the Tiller legislation.

> In the end, the peasant was left to his own resources, with no organization to speak for him above the village level. The government thus failed – despite the economic and development benefits of its programs, despite the increased security in the countryside – to create among the peasantry a strong, positive motivation to engage in the struggle on the official side. . . The programmatic aspects of pacification in Vietnam were therefore a substantial success, but they were unable to come to grips with the most deep-seated problems in rural life in Vietnam. These could only have been solved by providing the villagers with political levers linked to the national political process.[5]

What emerges from this analysis is a new pair of hypotheses, that among the factors that win the loyalty of a population and establish legitimacy, distributional effects may be more

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[2]   Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An: Revolutionary Conflict in a Vietnamese Province* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), p. 176 (emphasis in original).

[3]   Ibid., p. 165.

[4]   Douglas S. Blaufarb, *The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance 1950 to the Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), pp. 289, 309-310.

[5]   Ibid., pp. 272, 277.

important than absolute effects, and political effects may be more important than economic effects. This latter observation echoes Horowitz's caution cited in Chapter 1, that while political power is often an instrument for determining allocation of material benefits, "power may also be the benefit. . . Broad matters of group status regularly have equal or superior standing to the narrow allocative decisions often taken to be the uniform stuff of everyday politics."[6]

Table 4 below presents a graphical representation of these hypotheses together with some examples of the kinds of government measures that might fit into each of the four categories implied by the interaction of the hypotheses.

Note that this framework is silent on the role of group identities and ethnic and religious conflict. But ethnic and religious identities can be related to the framework in at least two important ways. First, ethnic and religious affiliation may define the key groups among which wealth and political power is distributed. In more homogenous societies, the most important groups might be defined by class or alignment with other interests. Second, perhaps the presence of ethnic or religious conflict could accentuate the relative importance of political power over economic power, in the spirit of Horowitz's comments above.

Table 4: An Alternative Assessment Framework for Effectiveness of Governance Measures & Effects in Counterinsurgency

	ECONOMIC MEASURES & EFFECTS	POLITICAL MEASURES & EFFECTS
ABSOLUTE MEASURES & EFFECTS	Examples: direct aid, job creation, economic growth, public works Hypothesized Effectiveness: least effective	Examples: enfranchisement Hypothesized Effectiveness: moderately effective
DISTRIBUTIONAL MEASURES & EFFECTS	Examples: allocation of public resources, tax policy, land ownership Hypothesized Effectiveness: moderately effective	Examples: constitutional structure (national and local level), representation in decision-making processes Hypothesized Effectiveness: most effective

So, for example, despite the failings of the GVN in establishing equitable political processes between federal and local governments, it was able to score a major victory against the VC through land reform, a fundamentally economic redistributive measure. Would such an initiative have had such an effect in an ethnically divided society? In Algeria, where ethnic conflict was at the center of the insurgency, strong economic growth and job creation seemed not to matter a great deal, and it is hard to imagine as strong an effect of land reform on the fortunes

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[6]   Horowitz, p. 187 (emphasis in original).

of the FLN as the effect the VC experienced. Constantin Melnik draws just this conclusion in his analysis of the Algerian war.

> If the established power chooses to substitute economic and social amelioration for political gratification, its impact on the population will be subject to limitations which stem from the very nature of this form of action. In the first place, economic development and improvement in the standard of living are slow. A long period must pass before economic measures begin to show results and especially before they take the form of consecutive improvements in the standard of living. Therefore, the population will not immediately enjoy substantial advantages. Secondly, economic development often goes hand in hand with upheavals in the social order which undermine the immediate interests of a more or less important fraction of the population. For instance, steps to modernize Algerian agriculture only increased the exodus from the countryside to the large cities where a poverty stricken population was already a prime target for the Politico-Administrative Organization of the FLN. Therefore, a program for economic modernization can increase the discontent of at least a part of the population. Thirdly, a program for economic development, even for immediate aid, which has been planned according to modern theoretical concepts, is often misunderstood by under-developed populations who do not appreciate its benefits. In Algeria, for example, the construction of modern housing brought only slight immediate satisfaction to a population which was more attached to the old tribal forms of life than to modern comfort. In the fourth place, progressive improvement in the standard of living may be considered natural and inevitable, so that credit will not be given to the established power. In such situations only a very profound change in general living conditions – a long-range accomplishment – could modify the fundamental political attitudes of the population.[7]

The framework derived from these insights could benefit from greater theoretical scrutiny, but for the purposes of future research, it can help in presenting and framing a few more hypotheses relevant to the case studies such as those drawn from the war in Iraq.

Concluding Thoughts

This paper has aimed to raise new questions about the roles of governance and ethnic identity in counterinsurgencies and to build a conceptual and methodological foundation for future research on those questions. Its conceptual arguments can be summarized as follows:

- Prevailing policy and strategy for counterinsurgency in the United States reflect assumptions about the bases of political legitimacy that are rooted in Western political philosophy and Cold War history.
- In particular, conception of counterinsurgency as a competition of governance between insurgents and counterinsurgents is based on a materialistic view of social welfare, justice, and legitimate authority that is not universally held.
- A substantial body of scholarship establishes that conflicts where ethnic and religious identities are politically salient have different dynamics than other conflicts.

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[7]   Constantin Melnik, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 23, 1964), pp. 232-233.

- In principle, counterinsurgency strategies emphasizing improved governance are likely to be less effective where identities are contested than where they are not. Anecdotal evidence supports this hypothesis, but it has not been subjected to serious empirical study.

- Design of counterinsurgency strategy should pay particular attention to the severity of ethnic or religious cleavages prior to the outbreak of conflict with the goal of determining whether group loyalties are likely to be malleable or relatively fixed during the conflict.

- Two other hypotheses worthy of examination regarding strategies that win the loyalty of a population and establish legitimacy, are that 1) distributional effects may be more important than absolute effects, and 2) political effects may be more important than economic effects.

Its methodological arguments can be summarized as follows:

- Developers and analysts of counterinsurgency strategy should strive to distinguish between the effects of governance measures and security measures, despite the considerable difficulties of doing so.

- Legitimacy, though undoubtedly important to the theory of insurgency and counterinsurgency, is not an analytically tractable variable because generally it can only be inferred from the dynamics of other variables.

- Empirical assessments of counterinsurgency run a high risk of endogeneity problems due to the similar observable characteristics of the security measures implemented by counterinsurgents and the sustainable security environment those measures are intended to help create. This implies that detailed analytic techniques (such as process tracing) focused on local levels of activity are best suited to analysis of counterinsurgency.

- The war in Iraq presents good opportunities for comparative case study analysis.

Finally, some preliminary insights from the Malayan, Algerian, and Vietnamese cases examined here include the following:

- Experiences in Malaya and Vietnam provide some evidence to support the conventional wisdom that providing good governance is an effective strategy for counterinsurgents.

- However, all three cases suggest that the efficacy of governance-based strategies is more ambiguous and complicated than is usually assumed.

- The Algerian case provides some qualified support for the hypothesis that the politics of ethnic identity can subvert the effectiveness of governance-based strategies.

A prominent analyst of irregular warfare has argued that "an effective counterinsurgency program depends on an accurate, substantive, and comprehensive profile of the adversary and the

environmental context with which he operates."[8] This paper suggests that close attention to the role and dynamics of ethnic and religious identities be a first-order issue in developing such a "comprehensive profile."   Accordingly, policymakers would benefit from a framework for developing and analyzing counterinsurgency strategy that is integrative of a diverse range of approaches to governance, identity, and legitimacy. More research is clearly needed to advance the arguments made here and to test the hypotheses and analytic framework developed. And, as has been argued throughout the paper, the emerging history of the war in Iraq is not only an inspiration for many of these ideas, but will be an important new frontier for pursuing further research about them. The concepts outlined here are offered up as building blocks for that task.

In the meantime, policymakers might consider adopting a new version of the classic metaphor of counterinsurgency: much may depend in the coming years on finer discrimination between the "hard hearts" of insurgents who fight for their identities and the "open minds" of insurgents who fight for better governance.

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[8]   Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse, 2nd Edition* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), p. 155.

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14. ABSTRACT

The premise of most Western thinking on counterinsurgency is that success depends on establishing a perception of legitimacy among local populations. The path to legitimacy is often seen as the improvement of governance in the form of effective and efficient administration of government and public services. However, good governance is not the only basis for claims to legitimacy, especially in environments where ethnic or religious identities are politically salient. This paper raises new questions about the roles of governance and ethnic identities in counterinsurgencies, builds a conceptual and methodological framework for research on those questions and applies that framework to analysis to three classic cases of counterinsurgency in the 20th century: in Malaya, Algeria, and South Vietnam.

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